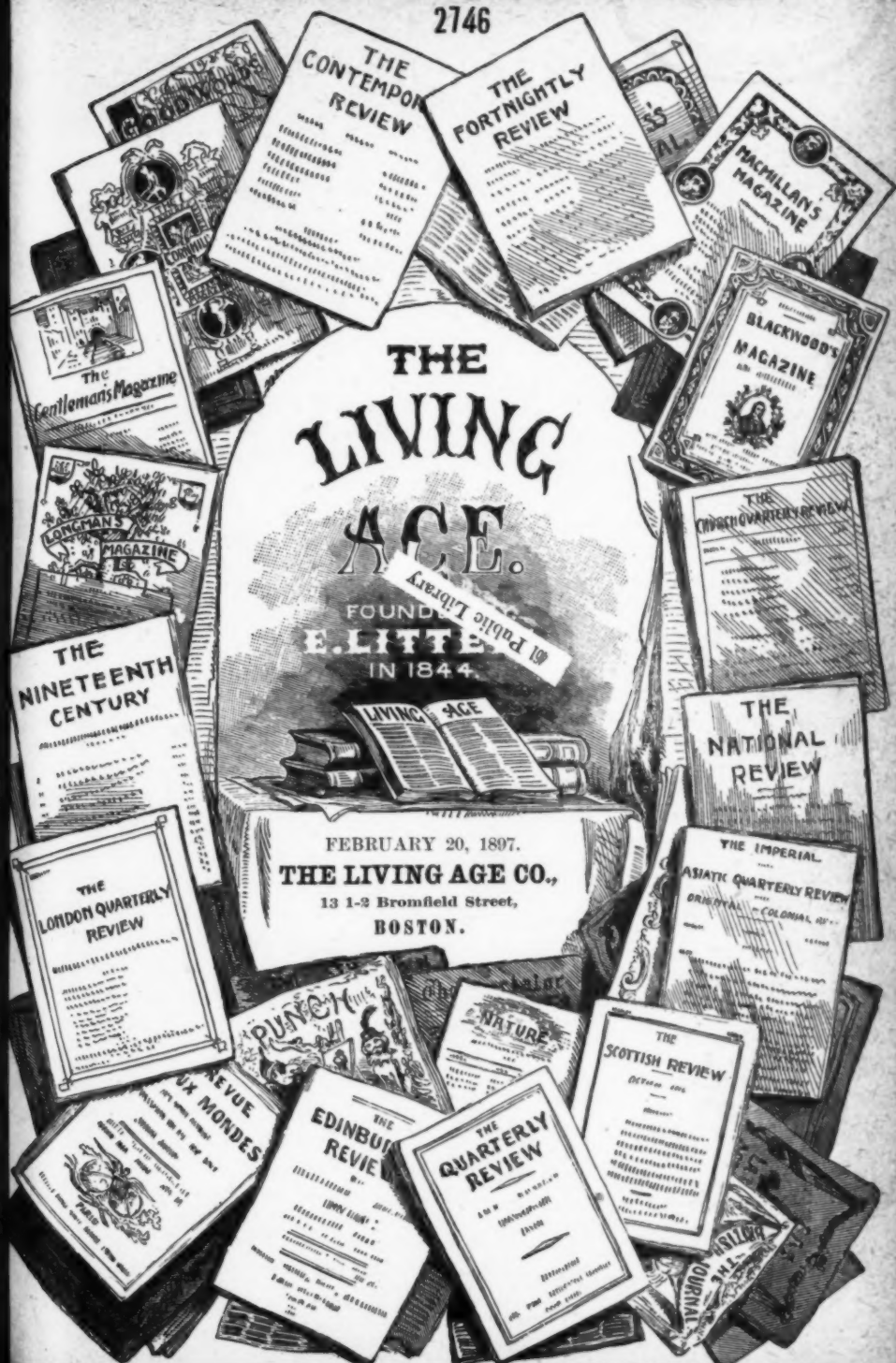


THE NEW REALISM.—By H. D. TRAILL.

2746



APPLETONS' POPULAR SCIENCE MONTHLY.

Prospectus for 1897.

DURING the last few years science has been unusually fruitful in important and striking discoveries. Helium and argon, the electric furnace, and the X-ray are but a few of the more startling results in the physical sciences. Similarly important if less sensational advances are being made in the fields of medicine and sanitation. Students of society and politics are coming to see the necessity for a scientific study of sociology, if we are to cope successfully with the increasing difficulties of modern civilization. We have always insisted that such a study was the only one which promised any satisfactory solution of social problems, and that many of society's worst evils were due simply to ignorance of elementary scientific principles. It is very gratifying to observe the unmistakable signs of a growing acceptance of this view that have become manifest during recent years. In our issues for 1897 we shall endeavor, as heretofore, to help on this movement by giving to the general public month by month a summary, in simple words, of what is going on in the various fields of scientific research, and of the applications of the principles thus worked out.

Among the features of special interest will be a series of papers by Prof. WILLIAM Z. RIPLEY, on the Racial Geography of Europe, the subject of the last course of Lowell lectures delivered by him. The articles will be freely illustrated. DAVID A. WELLS's interesting papers on Taxation will continue, and there will be a series of carefully prepared illustrated articles on science at the universities, which is to include accounts of the leading scientific institutions and societies of the country. Education and child psychology will be given considerable space, and sanitary questions, especially in connection with household economy, will receive attention. Timely single articles may be expected from our usual contributors, among whom may be named—

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THE LIVING AGE.

Sixth Series,
Volume XIII. }

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{ From Beginning,
Vol. CCXII.

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THE DISTANT SHADOW-LAND.

Far, far aloof from Olympus and its thunder,

Lost midway in the spaces of the night,
Lies a dim wilderness of vanity and wonder,

Half within darkness and half amid the light.

Stray suns visit it; the callow moon has found it:

Sad seas circle it, a melancholy strand;
Dreams impeople it, and shadows are around it,

And the Gods know it as the distant Shadow-Land.

Phantom music of Coronach and Pæan
Rolls wind-borne to the sky forevermore;

Sun-mists open, and reveal to Empyrean
How shadows live on the visionary shore.

Life that were sleep, but for dreams that overcome her,

Smiles that are tears, and ambition that is pain,

Hopes unharvested, and springs without a summer,

Round the sad year, and renew themselves again.

All things there suffer death and alteration,

Fair flowers bloom for a season and are bright,

Songs over-sweet but outlive a generation,
Ring for a little and are gathered into night.

Cycles decay and their sepulchres have perished,

Kingdoms depart and their palaces are sand,

Names unchronicled, and memories uncherished

Fill the lost annals of the distant Shadow-Land.

Here great souls, in a plentitude of vision,
Planned high deeds as immortal as the sun;

Winds sang their requiem, and had them in derision—

Thoughts left in cloudland; purposes undone.

Here sate Youth with the crown her lover brought her,

Fond words woven for her coronal to be;

Brief lived, beautiful, she laid it by the water—

Time's waves carried it, and whelmed it in the sea.

What spirits these so forsaken and so jaded:

White plumes stained and apparel that is rent:

Wild eyes dim with ideals which have faded:

Weary feet wearily resting in ascent?

Heroes and patriots, a company benighted,

Looking back drearily they see, along the plain,

Many a bright beacon which liberty had lighted

Dying out slowly in the wind and in the rain.

"Ah! sad realms, where the ripest of the meadows

Bring bitter seeds to maturity," I cried;

"Ah, sweet life, who would change thee for the shadows!

Take me again to earth's summers, O my guide!"

Smiling he answered me, "Thy journey home is ended,

Raise up thine eyes, and behold on either hand;"

Straightway lifting them, I saw and comprehended,

Earth was herself the Gods' distant Shadow-Land.

LORD BOWEN.

THE NEW DAY.

Oh, happy was the thought of those

Who reckoned by the setting sun

Not finished days, but days begun—

Hushed days begun with starred repose!

Wise had it been that mode to keep—

To say that death, like sunset, brings

A source and not an end of things,

A new day opening with a sleep.

Sunday Magazine.

G. W. WOOD.

From Blackwood's Magazine.
THE LAND OF SUSPENSE.

A STORY OF THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN.

III.

All the night long he sat there leaning his head upon his hands, sometimes leaning against the great trunk of the tree behind him, which gave him a sensation of forlorn comfort, the only thing that recognized him as still tangible, a thing of flesh and blood. He sat there amid all the fragrant breathing of the night as in the lap of a mother who cooled his forehead with dewy touches, and subdued his soul into the calm of inanimate things. And yet there was nothing inanimate in this great realm of nature where the air was fresh and free, like the air upon a mountain-top where there is no wind but only a sense of being far above all hindrance or soil, and near to heaven. The sky above was alive with stars, stars that were something more than stars, that had rounded and expanded into orbs of light and seemed almost within reach, as if there might be means of entering them and knowing their secrets. The light that came from them was enough to make everything visible in a tender and soft radiance where every variety of shade had its own transparency and sweetness of lovely meaning—such a light as never was on sea or shore. Through the openings of the trees he could see far off the whole course of the valley clear in that mystic glow which was without color, where all was clear as in a vision, unlike the brightness of the day. The towers and pinnacles rose up on his right hand over the trees as if made of silver; the little floating vapors in the sky, the great pulsing and movement of the worlds of light above, the air which was as a rapture of purity and freedom,—all conveyed to the young man's bosom the sensation of boundless space, and a lofty height beyond the thoughts of men. And there was a subdued glow along the edge of the horizon, as if it passed into pure light as the stars did round their boundaries, hiding the life within.

Sometimes this young man had felt even upon the homely earth something

of that movement that is in the spheres, the swaying of the great planet as it ran its course in the heavens; but here it seemed like a faint stir of life in everything, a subtle and all-pervading current, a movement majestic, almost visible, in rhythm and measure, like God himself proceeding onward always in his supernal way. After a time, when the beating of the river of life in his own ears, the throbbing of his heart and current of his blood, were calmed by this greater movement and mystery, he gazed abroad upon the majestic night with a hush of reverence and of awe in which there was adoration. He was silent while God passed by, and felt the sweep of the great stars following in his train, and the air upon his face, the breath of their going, and the thrill of that vast procession through illimitable skies. He, a spirit, though not blessed, yet as a spirit recognized the great course of innumerable worlds and circles of being, following the mighty footsteps of their king.

Thus one moment of amazed and trembling revelation gave him rest in the glory of the night, and stilled the lesser voices and murmurs that filled his ears; but as a man is after all the centre of all systems to himself, the tide of thought and feeling rolled back, and with it the despair which the knowledge of his own condition had brought upon him. When his eyes came back to his immediate surroundings, the sudden sight of the green mound on which he sat, with all its undergrowth of moss and starry decoration of minute flowers, vacant under the faint light, as if there was no one there, drove his soul almost to madness in the sudden rediscovery. He felt the soft knots of the grass and cushion of the moss under him, yet when he looked there was nothing there. He grasped it with his hands and found it empty, though the moss seemed to yield and the blades of grass to bend under his weight. It was like madness rising up into his brain, and he felt with a mingling of ideas distraught that he must spring to his feet and rush forth after God upon his awful way, crying to him, entreating, blaspheming, forcing his attention,

though it was through that incomprehensible whirl of space, and threading the unseen path from star to star.

But that wild impulse, like others, died away. A man, be he ever so rebellious, learns to know that the impossible hedges all his steps; and he sank back upon his tree, suppressing himself, binding himself into the submission which he knew at the bottom of his heart was his only hope. He felt no fatigue, notwithstanding his long journey and the dreadful disappointment at the end. None of those imperious needs of the flesh which fill up so much of the time and distract so many of the thoughts of earth, moved him at all. He was free from everything, weariness and pain, and food and sleep and shelter. No thought of these things filled his mind. He did not even remark his exemption, so natural it seemed. He knew only the impossibility that girded him round and round. He could not change the condition he had come to. No one could change it. Such as it was he had to endure it, to find the reason for it, to discover the compensation. To go mad, and dash his head against the confines of the world, and force a reversal from God of his sentence was impossible. Ah! he fell low again, with his face hidden in the softly rustling grass. The impossible girt him round with its circle of iron. Rebel, submit, content himself, go mad—these were all things that could be done. But reverse God's sentence, no! not if he had the strength of giants, not if he had the power of the whole world, upon a little sod of whose surface his wounded spirit lay.

Presently he had controlled himself, and was sitting again with his back against his tree and his head leaning on his hands, gazing out upon the night yet seeing nothing. And as he sat there all his life rolled out before him like a long panorama—his little life with all its broken scenes, of which he had never known the meaning. Often he had thought they had no meaning, as certainly they had no intention, no plan, but only a foolish impulse, a touch from some one here and there, who had

pushed him unthinking to one side or another—not the straight way. What a succession of accidents it was to end in this! no purpose in it—no meaning; all a foolish rush here or there haphazard, the affair of a moment, although fate had taken up the changeable threads and woven it into certainty forever. He saw himself a boy, hesitating with one foot on the upper slope, drawn back by errant fancy, by curiosity, by accident—always by accident!—then, finding the lower road the easier, the higher hard to begin, putting off till to-morrow and to-morrow—but no meaning in it, oh, no purpose, no settled plan of rebellion, no intention to offend. He went over this again and again, till he felt himself a deeply injured man. Never had he meant any harm; he had even tried not to hurt any one else while he took his own pleasure, and he remembered the words that had been in the air following him wherever he went—nobody's enemy but his own. That was true, that was true! He had not tempted any one, nor ever defied God, whom he never doubted, for whose name, had there been need for that, he felt that he could have died rather than have been apostate to it. The tears came into his eyes with this thought. He had been wrong, very wrong; he had always known that, and hated it—yet done the same again; but never with any blasphemous meaning, never defying God, always knowing that the other way was the best, and hoping one day when his hour of pleasure was over—And what had he not paid already for his folly!—of all that he might have done in the other life, he had done nothing; of all that he might have attained, nothing. He had wrought no deliverance in the earth. It was all loss, loss, miserable failure; and hearts breaking, his own as well as the rest. But no purpose in it. He had never intended any day of his disobedience, from first to last, to deny his Maker or insult him. Never, never! It was the one thing he was certain of amid all the doubts and changes, all the confusions in his life.

And, perhaps, this was how it happened, that when he had set out on his

journey that morning—was it still the same morning, not twenty-four hours off, the morning of yesterday?—his heart had been so light. He had anticipated nothing but good. He had made sure that all the links of his old habits would be broken, that he would be lifted without effort of his to a better sphere. He had not said this to himself in words, nor, indeed, was he clear in his mind that he expected anything definite, or what it was he expected—but only something good, happiness that would bring back all that he had missed in the time that was past. Of one thing he had been very sure, that he would not err again; he had thought of the ways of men, so vain and melancholy, with a great relief in being done with them. And too glad and thankful he would have been to be done with them! to take his place in the home where he believed he was going, and his share of all the duty there, whatever it might be. But now—no home, no duty, no life for him. He was nothing—no man, a Voice, and no more.

How many times, in what an infinity of time and leisure, did he go over these thoughts! The night stole on, all glorious in quiet and repose—some of the wondrous lights above gliding out of sight as the world in which he was ascended and descended, going down into the night, and then with a half-sensible turn and thrill turning round to the day—and some came up into sight in the great round of the firmament that had been unseen before. Then a thrill ran through the wood, and voices began to awaken in the trees—little tongues of birds twittering, wakest thou, sleepest thou?—among the branches, before all their little world was roused and the great hymn began. The young man had not been prepared for that hymn, and it took him strangely in a surprise and passion of sympathy; he said to himself that he had not known there were birds here, and the moisture came to his eyes. Then he tried to join with a note of his man's voice and startled them all, till he saw his mistake and tried instead a low and soft whistle, which they took for the

note of a new comrade and burst forth again. The young man felt his spirit all subdued by that morning hymn, and tried to say his prayers in a great confusion, stammering, not knowing what words to use. The old prayers seemed so out of place. And then he remembered what all the people had said to him—God save you!—and repeated it with a faltering and a trembling—God save me! God save me! Not "give me this day my daily bread." Was that old-fashioned? out of date? He trembled, and all his strength seemed to melt like water, and he said only, God save me! God save me! not knowing what he said.

All these strange emotions filled the time and the world about him, yet was his mind free to note the growth of the morning, coming fresh as it seemed out of the hand of God; the great valley came slowly to life and to the light, and the silence filled with sound as water wells up in a fountain. As for himself, he did not stir, but watched, not now despairing, nor even questioning, but still; a spectator wondering and looking on, hushed to the bottom of his heart, to see what all things did, having for himself no duty, no work; and feeling, so far as he felt at all, a nothingness, as if he were part of the mound on which he lay, where he fancied vaguely the grasses had begun already to grow over him. What would they do, they who were other than he, they to whom everything belonged, though to him nothing belonged? He watched what they would do, what the morning would bring to them, with much eagerness in his heart; but the thickness of the trees and the brushwood, which was very close in that direction, shut out his view. And perhaps his curiosity was not so great as he thought, for his mind filled with many thoughts which revolved about himself, and presently he forgot all that was around him, and became, still a spectator indeed, but a spectator of his own being, and of those things which were going on in it. And it seemed now that the thing most natural to him, who now possessed nothing of his own, was to go back upon

the time when he possessed so much. love and companionship, and hope and the power of doing, and pleasure of every kind. His heart had grown sick of that life before he left it, and he had often felt it empty of everything, and that all was vanity. But now his heart returned to it, longing and wondering how he should ever have been so weary. Then he had been a man, but now was nothing, a Voice only, no more. And when he remembered how, in the smallest thing as in the greatest, he had chosen and taken his own way, and had pleasure in his will and independence, and had done this and that because he pleased, with no other reason for it, and that now there was nothing for him to choose, nothing to do—himself nothing, and all his ways nothing, a straw blown upon the wind! In the other life there had been threatenings of punishment and torture, but never of this—and he thought to himself, though with a shiver, that the fire and the burning would have been more easy to bear, and perhaps a fierce encounter with the devils who tormented lost souls—a rising up against them, and call for justice out of the pit. To fight, to struggle, to resist, these fierce joys seemed to attract him, to revive his heart. But here there was nothing—neither good nor evil, neither use nor destruction. The Power which he had offended despised him, would not lay a finger on him, left him to rot and perish. No! worse by far than that, to go on in nothingness forever and ever, to be and not to be, at one and the same time—

As these thoughts began to quicken and whirl through his brain—for though he began in quiet they gradually gained velocity and strength, till the rush was like the blazing of fire or the sweep of water in a flood, consuming and carrying him away—he became aware of an external sound which drove them away at once like a flight of birds careering out of sight. And looking up whence the sound came, he saw a movement as of some one searching amid the brushwood, and presently the thick branches were pushed aside and a face

suddenly appeared, looking in to the opening in which the young man sat. It was a face which awakened in him at first a great throb of loving and kindness, being a countenance he had longed for for many a day, thinking that had it shone upon him on earth it might have saved him from all his follies; but along with this there came a rush of resentment into his mind which checked the cry of "Father!" which had come to his lips. And he sat unmoving, allowing those eyes to search through the shade, though he knew that till he spoke he could never be found. It gave him a kind of angry pleasure to see the curves of anxiety round them, the eagerness of the look. Ah, he was sorry! but what was that when he had shut his door, when he had made no effort to bring the wanderer in. "My mother," said the young man, "would have been different; never would she have rested and left me outside;" but then there struck him like an arrow the thought of many moments in the past when he had said to himself, "If my father had been here!"

The other figure stood wistfully under the shadow of the tree—a man not old, full of the dignity and strength of life—like one who knew much and had seen much, and whose hands were full of serious affairs. You might have been sure that he had left for a moment many things that called for his care to come here on this quest. His eyes were clear, shining with truth and justice and honor. Such eyes shine like stars even in the earth, and the eyes of the helpless understand and the poor cry to them. Nothing could disturb the heavenly quiet in them, the look of a soul at peace; but the curves of the eyelids were troubled, and the strain of anxious love was in his face. After a moment he said, the softness of his voice seeming to search through the silence as his eyes searched through the void, "My son! are you here, my son?"

The young man still paused a little, unwilling to relieve the other, yet not willing to lose the pleasure of revealing like a reproach his own abandoned state. "I am here," at last he said.

The father pushed through the trees and came to him quickly, and once more there came into the young man's mind the story of him who saw his son a long way off, and ran and fell upon his neck. Had he himself been as of old, this was what his father would have done—but how can a man embrace a voice? Yet the movement melted him, and made him rise to his feet to meet the other, though still with that unreasoning resentment in his mind, as though the door had been shut upon him, which was not shut, though he was unable to cross the threshold. There was authority and command, as of one used to rule, in the face of this man who was his father; but everything else was veiled with the great pity and love that was in his voice. "It was not thus we hoped to welcome you, my son, my son!" he cried, coming near, with his arms stretched out.

"How is it," cried the young man, "that I feel all my members from head to foot, and every faculty, and yet you see me not, touch me not? It makes a man mad to be, and yet not to be."

"God save you!" said the father, with tears. "God aid you! We know not how it is—nor can we do anything to help. It is for your purification, and because that which is must have its natural accomplishment. The sins of the flesh destroy the flesh, as is just. But you, you are still able to love, to think, to adore your God in his works. My son, accept and submit—and the better day will come."

"Submit! to be nothing!" said the young man. And then he cried bitterly, "Have I any choice? It is stronger than I am. I must submit, since you will not help, nor any one. If my mother—" and here his voice broke. It was not that his mind felt all the bitterness with which he spoke; and he knew that no one could help him; yet having in him still all the humanness of a child, it gave him pleasure to wound one who might have helped him had things been otherwise, and to prove that he was abandoned and forsaken, he who hitherto had always been helped and forgiven. He looked for reproof, but none

came. His father, standing so near him, looking at him with such tender pity, said nothing but "My son!" and as these two words, whether from the Most High God or from the faltering lips of a man, enclose all of love that words can carry, what was there more that could be said?

"My son," he said, "it is not permitted here that we should discuss or that we should justify the ways of our God. Though you cry out against them, you know that they are just and very merciful, punishing not, but permitting that this which must be, should be accomplished in you. Yet not without hope. All that is of the spirit is yours as before. You can judge, you can understand, you can know. And above all you can love. What is greater than the mind and the heart? You are but naked of this frame, this body which is beloved and blessed because it is as the body of the Lord. But even for this not without hope. My child, the day will come when you will not think only of yourself. You will begin to think of him who for us lived and died and lived again, and is forever and ever. You will not consent to wipe out His name, but stand for Him among your fellows. And other things that are not you will fill your heart—"

"That are not me!—but who is so miserable as I?" cried the young man, covering his face with his hands.

The father paused for pity, looking at him with eyes that were full of tears. "It has not been given to you, oh my son," he said, "to pass by the Temple in the wood; yet still it may be. Heretofore you have done what you would, but not here; for here the will of God reigns alone, and man can contradict it no more. Yet from time to time," he said, "from time to time there is in this great Land of Suspense, as in all the worlds where the myriads of our brethren dwell, a day of grace when the Lord himself passes through. As he goes to visit the spheres of his dominions there is no place where he does not pass through, and hears every cry and heals every soul that comes to him. Beloved be his name! Blessing and love breathe round about him, and no one whom it

touches can withstand that holy breath."

The young man looked up, and for a moment it seemed that the eyes of the heavenly man and of the spirit met, and that he who was in the body, that house of God not made with hands, saw him who was out of the body; for the eyes of the son were full of tears like those of the father, and he said with a broken voice, "So I have always been taught to think of Him. I am no stranger, my father, my father! I have sinned but yet I am of His house."

"God bless thee, my son," the father said.

IV.

After this there came weary mornings and evenings, or what he felt to be such, taking no account of them, yet rousing ever from his thoughts to feel the glory of the day and the sweetness of the night; for neither tempest nor trouble was there, and the other great worlds that are visible in the dark, rolling along their course in the world of space, became as the houses of friends opening their doors, showing ever another and another world of men, some like *those others*, white men and shining, some in hosts of vague faces like the shadow of crowds which he knew to be as himself; and the sensation of all those multitudes about who peopled what we call the sky, multitudes more than could be numbered, being all those who had lived and died on the earth since its wonderful story began, silenced and soothed him as we are soothed to know that others are as we are, treading the same path. Many things were there which he could not understand. Sometimes it appeared to him that he could see the signs of great commotion in one of those neighboring worlds, and shouting afar off, which came but as a murmur to his ears; and once it seemed to him that he saw a great procession coming forth, as if the King were making a visitation from one star to another, and a great shining bridge of light was thrown from planet to planet, by which he went and came.

It was a long time, however, before

he saw that passing through of which his father had told him. Yet one day, in the rising of the morning, a note as of a silver bugle suddenly penetrated the spheres, and everything stirred with expectation, the very air and the birds in the trees, and everything that had life. He himself, drawn he could not tell how, almost against his will, by something that overmastered him, that made his breath come quick and his heart beat, hastened to the hill behind the wood, and placed himself on the highest point, where he could see all that went on below. Fain would his feet have gone farther, fain would they have carried him to the level of the valley which he could see stretching far to the east and to the west; for already he saw the first of the great procession appearing, and all the inhabitants of the town which should have been his home pouring forth in bands, in glistening garments, with flowers and palms to strew upon the path of him that was coming. The young man knew who it was that was coming, and his heart seemed to go forth out of his breast towards that great Traveller; but there was something in him that held back, and that made him cover his face in an anguish of shame. For who was he that he should dare to look upon the Lord as he passed, blessing all men upon his way? Something came floating up to him upon the air like a waft of blessing; was it a call to him—the sound of his name? He knew not, but dug his hands into the roots of the grass, and dared not to lift up his eyes. And in the mean time the great procession went on, while his heart, as it were, contended with him and cried, moaning and foaming and struggling, that he should go, while still he kept back ashamed, asking himself how he dared to look the Lord in the face, or hear him blessing the people, and find there was no word for him? There he lay, feeling every member of his frame contend with him to get to the feet of the Lord, yet he holding back; until all the wonderful marching of the train had passed along and become but an indistinct radiance upon the way, when he

lifted his eyes and looked after them, and broke into a great weeping, thinking that still he saw one in the midst like none whom he had ever seen before, one to whom his heart went out, and whom he would have given heaven and earth to follow. But the moment was over, and he could now follow no more.

This happened but once, and it may not be supposed that he spent all the endless time he had at his disposal in so agitating a way. By moments these thoughts came upon him and possessed him; yet seldom, for he was seldom alone, his fellow-inhabitants, both of one side and the other, coming to him continually and occupying him with other plans and ideas. Many visitors he had from the town upon the hill, the dwelling of his kindred; but time fails us to tell of these, and all the tender words they said, and their pity and their love. Sometimes he would speak with them—sometimes, if other things were in his mind, would make no response nor let them know where to find him, preferring the society of those who were as himself, and were with him always, sometimes one, sometimes many, talking and making expeditions here and there. They led him to many wonderful places, and showed him great sights, and many mysteries of the spheres became visible to him, and knowledge not permitted to earth, so that he could now solve many questions and find them simple, which, in the days of his former life, he could remember to have thought upon with awe as things that it was impossible to fathom. Thus he became wise, and more learned than the sages of the former world, and found a certain pleasure in these things which he learned and saw.

And it soon became apparent to him that many of his new companions held the belief that it was they who were the fortunate ones, being disencumbered of all hindrances and cares, with no duty or responsibility, but free to follow their pleasure, to go where they pleased, to enjoy knowledge and science and all the pleasures of the mind. There were some indeed who

were like himself, and would not be comforted because of being no longer men but only voices, without identity, without substance, and incapable of uniting themselves to each other save with the loosest ties. They were not brethren for joy and for sorrow, for neither was there; they could not stand by each other, or pledge themselves to be true friends for death and life, for of that there was no need. They were but acquaintances, each lost in the invisible when they parted, walking and talking together as long as each pleased the other, with no fellowship of mutual labor, or the sharing of work trouble. Wherever one voice accosted another there was acquaintance, but nothing that went further; for they had no mutual hopes or fears or anything to link them more closely together.

And many of those who had been long in this condition had made a belief for themselves, and tried to teach it to the new-comers, that this was the perfect life; for was not all freedom among them, no bondage, not even that of staying in one place, or confining yourself to one kind of associates, no pain, no limitations, but each free to learn all he could, to perfect his genius, to increase his knowledge? Was not this enough for any soul? And some of them scoffed at the idea of any reckoning yet to come, pointing out the unreasonableness of it, the impossibility of even recollecting, far less answering for, the events which had happened perhaps hundreds of years before, during the short time when one inhabited that foolish body, by some thought a disgusting thing, "a collection of sewers." And if there was no great day to come, which the very oldest spirits said had been threatened thousands of years since in their recollection and had never come to anything, what came of the equally old and foolish traditions of a divine personage ruling over all? As for the men who lived in all those villages and towns, who thought they were better than their neighbors, whom with their restricted faculties they could not see, what were they but laborers still, with

work and responsibilities upon them.—how much less happy than they who went free!

There were many, however, who were very uneasy when such conversation as this prevailed, and of these was the young man, whose thoughts were very fluctuating in respect to himself, but never on this point. "If you had seen, as I did," he would say, "the procession pass; and felt the heart tear out of you to go and fling itself at His feet." The elders laughed at such words, and bade him wait till he had seen it a hundred times, and without any feeling at all; but the others made a pause which betrayed some uneasy thoughts, and secretly were glad that they could not see each other's faces or betray the strange response in their own minds to what he said. One voice, a little tremulous, spoke, and said that these things which he called body and heart were an illusion, a distorted recollection of the chrysalis state in which their consciousness began; and another, that the body which had been mentioned was like a dog, and faithful, in its brutal way, to what it had been taught. They were all together, that company of wandering souls, in a great tower which stood upon the extreme edge of the world in which they dwelt, and which was built upon the rock, standing out into the illimitable world of space as into the sea, with precipices immeasurable sinking down below, lower than thought could reach, while the great tower rose higher than thought, swung upon that giddy edge, and, though built of indestructible rock, quivering in the great sweep of the atmosphere more tremendous than on the highest mountain-top. There were all the secrets of the celestial world revealed, and all the movements of the stars, and the workings of the planetary system, and all the wonderful apparatus by which they were observed and noted. And many men of the other kind were in that place, were at work and busy, whose duty it was to watch over the balance and the trim of all these blazing worlds, and to see that each kept in its orbit, and all its attendant stars in their places, that there

might be no wavering in the march of the heavens.

The wanderers went and came, through all these wonderful sights, and no one noted their coming and their going; for all the others were busy with their work and occupation, never slackening in their watch. And the young man, and some of his younger companions with him, looked upon them with envy, longing, but in vain, for some part or lot in the matter, and not to be thus unseen and without use in the great universe which seemed to go on without them though enclosing them in its great and mystic round. And as they gazed out from that watch-tower one of the others pointed to a little darkling planet hanging upon the skirts of space, half seen amid the glory of the greater stars. "That speck," he said, "is what we called the Earth, and bragged of as something great and wonderful in our time. Look at it, contemptible! dim with smokes and fogs, and the breath of toiling men."

"Yet it was our mother," said the young man, "and there we lived, and there we died."

"If you call that, the throes of the birth-hour, living; and the journey hither dying—trifling incidents of our career." It was the same voice which had first accosted him when he arrived in that world which now spoke, and there were many with him, the elder spirits; while with the young man were many of the new-comers, still sore and wounded to feel themselves dropped out of everything, and humbled to feel that they were but voices, and no longer men and women as of old. And they turned with the young man as he stretched out his arms, leaning on the parapet, unto the wide and whirling world of space.

"Oh little earth!" he said, "full of vapor and smoke and the thoughts of men, rising up to heaven. At least we were something then, not nothing; and dear Love was there, and all the hopes of God."

"Why not now also—why not now?" said something, that was but a tremble and a quiver by his side. "Because."

said the elder spirit, "we need not these ancient visions. Free souls are we in the world of thought, despising all that is below, knowing nothing that is above. What do ye murmur at, ye crew? What would ye have, insatiate souls? The universe is ours to admire and to enjoy. We go where we will, we live as we will. You want these phalansteries, these houses on the hills! prisons and bondage. What need ye, beyond what we have?"

The young man leaned over, the great wind playing with him, as if it subdued its force not to carry away this light and petty scrap of being. And stretching out his hands, he said, "What we want—it is God and Love."

This he said, not so much out of his own heart, as because there was something of that in him which poets have. And being so, he knew that it was true. And the spirits round him murmured and sobbed and repeated, "God and Love." And the others were silent and said no word.

He went back afterwards to his living place in the wood, which he had come to love because it was near the home of those who were his; and a number of those wanderers went with him, talking of what he had said and of what was in their hearts. "We thought it was here we should have found Him," they said; "we thought that to come hither was all that was wanted. Tell us, thou! has He failed? We were never His servants, yet we believed that He would save us at the end."

"This is not the end—it is but the beginning," the young man said.

"And will He save us, will He save us—at the end?" The voices all together were like a blast of weeping wind.

Then the young man turned upon them and cried, "What are we? what are we? Let us perish if He will, but He be all in all!"

This he said because of something that had come into him he knew not how; he felt it and obeyed its impulse, but knew not why. For still the first thing in his own heart, as in theirs, was to be saved—to be once more a man in His image, and no longer a wandering

ghost unclothed. To be and to be seen of his fellows, and to speak with other men—even if it should bring pain and sorrow; for sorrow and pain are higher things than to be nothing, though at your ease and free as the wind.

He sat all that night through on his favorite mound, thinking and pondering within himself; and as he thought of all he had seen and the great Universe that had opened upon him at the height of that watch-tower, the wondrous circle of the stars, and all the mysteries of being which hung upon his breath who made them, he began to understand what he himself had said, and his eyes grew wet as when he had seen the Lord pass and his heart had fought with him to get free to fling itself in the Master's path. He had held it back then, but not now. He looked up to the skies above him, and saw those glorious worlds forever moving in that sublime circle around the unseen throne; and this world in which he was swaying softly turning toward the highest Light. And he said to himself what one had said thousands of years ago—a shepherd-boy under the starry heavens—"What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" And it seemed to him that he himself, about whom he had been spending so many thoughts, murmuring because of his losses, and convulsing all the quiet wood with longings after another state—he himself, who had been the centre of the world to him, was indeed nothing, no more than a drop of dew or a blade of grass in the great Universe of God. And he cried out, but softly, to the One that hears all things, "Be Thou! forever and ever; and let me be nothing, for nothing I am. But Thou, be Thou supreme and all in all!"

V.

In the glory of the morning the young man awoke, for even in the solemnity of his act, giving up everything, even hope if the Lord so willed, he had been surprised by that human sweetness of sleep which was not necessary to his state of being, yet delightful as the dew when it came, refreshing the soul. There was never anything but fair

weather in that world, yet it seemed to him when he opened his eye that no day had ever been so fair as this; and he asked himself, Was it perhaps Easter or some great holiday, of which he had lost count in the passing of the years and the days? Everything shone and glistened and sent forth breathings of delight under the shining of the sun, and the whole world was gay, and every drop of dew was like another perfect world of joy and blessing. He could not rest where he was on so happy a morning, but went forth and visited all the wood, as one visits one's friends when there is a great rejoicing to see that they are rejoicing too.

At last he found himself upon that pleasant knoll from which he could see the whole valley lying in a rapture under the joyful light and he saw that there was much movement in the town near him, and once more faces at all the windows, and white figures looking over the parapet of the ascent where he had gone up, but had not been admitted. They were looking then for some one, some one who would be of his kindred; and it would be an event for him as well as for them, and perhaps even he would gain something—a companion, a friend. But he stopped these thoughts while they were in his mind, and tried to think what it would be to him if the new-comer was received where he had not been received, and came as a man in the body which God gave—to be among the others, not banished into nothingness. For a long time he was in doubt, for no one came up the ascending path except those whom he knew, whose business it was, and he looked in vain for a stranger; and there began to rise in his heart a half hope half fear that he for whom they were all looking should come as he himself had done—invisible; a voice only, and no man.

But lo! while he watched there came forth from the silver line of the great highway a single figure, of one who sang as he came—not in haste, but almost slowly, standing still and looking round him from time to time, as if the beauty of the world was so sweet to him

that he could not go on, then turning his face towards the town and proceeding upon his way. The young man put out his hands, and suddenly clasped them together, and gazed in a suspense upon which his whole being seemed to hang. It was he, it was he! He had known the outline against the light while it was still but a shadow; he had recognized every footstep, and the turn of the head, and every line and every movement. Oh, how easy to know those who are one's own, however far off!—the familiar gesture, the little movement that is nothing, that a stranger would never see. He sprang up to rush down the hill and meet him, calling his name, and reflecting that even those at the gate, though they were there to welcome him, could not know him as he did. But his feet were as rooted to the soil, and he sank down again with a sob in his bosom, and a strong pang that seemed to rend him in twain. Not for him, not for him, was this delight, to meet his brother and fall upon his neck, and ask a thousand things of home! To look on was all that was permitted to him. Why should he go, who was nothing, who could not take his hand, or show his face where those were who were the people of the Lord? He sank down upon his knoll, and covered his face with his hands, and heard the tumult of glad voices, and the welcomes and shouts of joy with which the wayfarer was taken in. He listened to every word, while the voices streamed up the steep ascent and the stranger was brought with rejoicing to his father's house. Was he glad too? Was there a pang in his heart, thinking that these welcomes had been prepared for him too, till it was discovered what he was? His voice, which was all he had, seemed choked in his throat. He could not speak, he could not cry. Vanity of vanities, nothing of nothingness! even his voice went from him, and he was no more than a thought.

Thus it was that he did not see, because he could not look; but heard every sound and the footsteps on the stones, and the shouts from above and the

songs below. When they died away he felt in the bitterness of his heart as if he had been again shut out, as if it had been the day of his first refusal; but, more bitter still, shut out, and forever shut out, and never again to hold converse with his kin and rejoice with them. For what should he rejoice? That he was shut out, and that the open gates were barred against him, and only him? But at least they might have let him share the joy that his brother had come and was more happy than he. He sprang up and turned away, still covering his face, that he might not see those walls and towers into the heart of which the joy of welcome had swept, and were now but faintly heard—and went quickly away and hid himself in the heart of the wood; not in his accustomed place,—partly because his heart was sick of all that lived and breathed about him, and partly in perversity, that they might not find him when they came to search for him, as he knew they were sure to do. Ah! why was this? why was this, that an event which was so joyful should throw him back, back into the abyss from which his soul had escaped? He had escaped from himself; he had consented to be nothing, and to know that he was nothing—that it was not for him that heaven and earth should be disturbed, as if an atom was to make so much commotion for its own well-being; but now this atom once again blotted out both God and Heaven.

He struggled manfully in his heart to come to an end. "I know," he said to himself, "that it was not fit that I who had sinned should be rewarded. I have come to little harm. I suffer nothing. I have the whole world left, more beautiful than heart had conceived. And once in a thousand years the Lord will pass by, and I shall see him, even if it be no more. And they will all come to comfort me and talk to me, and not forget me—and my brother—" But he did not say my brother. He said a name; and at the sound of that name a great sobbing seized him, and the recollection of so many things that were past, and the home that never had been closed against him, and the love that

had been his all his life. And then there came upon him suddenly another thought, at the coming of which his heart stood still, and strained upon all its chords as if it would sink away from him; and he fell upon his knees and lifted up his head and cried with an awful cry, "God! the mother, the mother!" And the far distant earth seemed to roll up under his vision and open, and show a house desolate and a woman who sat within. And he who was himself desolate, yet within sight of the joy, forgot himself and everything that was his, to think of her. The mother, the mother; he flung himself on his face, he rose again to his feet, he stood and held out his hands to God, calling to him and repeating his name, "God! God!" and then "Father!" if, perhaps, that might reach him better. "For now she is alone," he cried. And then in his trouble he reproached the Most High God, and cried out, "Thou are not alone; Thou hast Thy Son." And he forgot all his trouble and complaining, and became all one prayer, one cry for another, for one who was desolate and had now no child.

Then straight like an arrow from a bow he went away, leaving his wood and the home if his kindred, and the valley, hastening he knew not where. For in his heart he felt that there must be some way, some place in which he could reach the footstool of the great Father, and pray to be forgotten and blotted out forever, rather than that she should be left to weep alone.

VI.

It was close to one of those great bridges by which the Lord passed to the other worlds around,—a bridge that rose light as the sea-foam, built of white marble and of alabaster, and every line marked with fine gold, which sometimes shone as if with jewels, and sometimes seemed to melt away in the clouds as if it had not been; but whether it was built of the stones of the earth, or whether of vapors and clouds, flung itself boldly across the abyss, and bore the army and the attendants of the Lord whenever he came. And near to this place, where the broad highway

seemed itself to march and continue along the bridge, there was a cathedral in the wood. The young man had heard of it from many. It was by this great temple that those others passed who preserved their being as men; and those who were but Voices moaned and lamented often, saying that they had missed the way. But it was not for this, nor indeed knowingly at all, that the young man made his way here; but only in the height of his anguish, that he might find some holy place where God might listen to his cry.

The day had come towards its end, and the glory of the sunset lit up the white and glorious bridge which spanned the air and clouds, and disappeared into a mystery of the unseen such as no eyes of man could penetrate or trace, to the other side. The young man did not pause to look at this wonder of the world, but turned aside to the temple in the wood. His footsteps were drawn towards it, he scarcely knew how; but until he saw it he knew not that this was that Temple of which he had heard. But of that great cathedral what tongue can tell? for it was not built by hands, nor were its arches created and its pillars put into their place by any workman, whether mortal or immortal; for where it stood it grew with its feet in the living soil, and every column a living tree straight and noble, and the vault above woven of foliage, which changed and moved with every breath, and let in the changings of the light, living too, and moving ceaselessly from east to west, through all the brilliant hours of the day; and during the night a great vision of stars was in the place where the lights should be, like silver lamps upon the altar, and in the lofty fragrant roof, where the leaves trembled and glistened; and its floor was made of living flowers throwing up their fragrance, which was sweeter than incense; and day by day it lived and grew, pushing higher and higher towards the skies, straight and tall and strong, reaching upward like the living thing it was. The sunset was still upon the western front, and streaming upon the great doorway, which was

ever open, and wreathed in every climbing thing that blows, the long branches clinging one to another to find a place, and the flowers thickening and clustering upon the holy arch in an eagerness to be there; and there was a sound within of noble music and choirs unseen, which sang their hymns of praise to God both through the night and in the day.

The young man went in without a pause, thinking neither of the beautiful place not of the strangeness of it, but only that it was the temple not made with hands, where the Lord loved to pause on his journey, and where the great Father came to commune with his Son, and which the ever-living Spirit had chosen for a place to dwell in; although not in this place or any other was that great Presence bound, but might be called upon by every path, and even in the common highroad where all men went to and fro. The young man did not remember except in a confusion what it was he had heard of the cathedral in the wood, nor knew he why he came except with a thought that it was the holiest place; and now there was no thought in his mind but only one, to call upon every holy name,—that of the Father, who surely knew if there was any knowledge, what love was in the heart of a mother; and of the Son, who knew what sorrow was, and to be forsaken, above all men that ever lived; and of him whose name was the Comforter. He flung himself upon the floor, and in the great silence—for the music rolled away and was heard no more when he came in—called and called upon these holy names. "You who are together," he cried, "leave not her alone!" And in the anguish of his prayer he was bold, and reminded the Lord that this was the Image he had chosen of a love that never failed. "Can a woman forget her child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb." And should He above, who knows best. He who loves most, leave the woman to be alone, alone!

Presently words failed him, and he only knew that he held her as it seemed

up in his arms to God. And slowly the living day died out of the cathedral in the wood, and the living night came in and shone through the tracery of the vault above, and the stars in their places lit up the living walls, and everything breathed a silent worship up to the heavens, the flowers with their odors and the leaves with their greenness; and every noble tree stood up and called upon the name of the Lord. And the swallow and the sparrow, God's little children, and many a singing bird weary with the joy and the song of day, nestled among the branches and went to sleep in His care. And over the young man there came a great calm instead of the anguish of that prayer, and as the soft hours stole on to midnight, and the great stillness wrapt him round and round, fatigue and peace stole over him, and he fell asleep in the middle of his prayer among the flowers.

There were those about who were coming and going forever, faint with longing and desire to enter the Temple of the wood. But as in that world there are no bolts and bars, but only an unseen bond upon the feet and upon the heart of a man, so that he cannot go where he would until it is his hour—all that these longing souls could do was to linger and gaze and await the moment when they might enter. And many were always gathered about the door, gazing in where they so fain would be. And they saw the young man lying upon the flowers, and wondered at him that he should sleep in so blessed a place. And some said, "God forbid that I should sleep if I were there;" and some, "God save him though he sleeps!" And one who stood almost upon the threshold, and knew that he should be one of the first to pass, hushed these voices and said low, "It is the beginning of the mystery and of the new birth." And a murmur arose very softly, and a faint crying, "What did he do to attain the heavenly gift?" But the soul upon the threshold hushed them all: "Sleep came upon him while he prayed. Be still and see the goodness of the Lord; he prayed not for himself but for another."

The night had gone while these voices went and came; and he that spoke last caught with his words the little morning breeze which at that moment sprang up with the first glimmer of the sun; and all around the living walls of that house not made with hands it breathed back the words, "not for himself but another," like a song; and blowing in at the wide door—for nothing can stop the winds of God, which make all the world pure—breathed over the young man where he lay. And in his sleep he felt the soft touch upon his forehead like the hand of his mother, and waking, having prayed for her till he slept, prayed again when he was roused, with a soft cry of "God save her!" while still he was but half awake. And in the waking he lay a long time forgetting where he was. And he saw something white and wonderful stretched upon the flowers where he lay, and knew not what it was. Then slowly as he came to himself he remembered everything, and saw from the east the first arrow of gold that told of the sunrise, and in the great peace of his heart he prayed no more, for it seemed to him that his prayer was heard. So sweet was that calm that he lay and did not move, recollecting himself, and saying to himself that it was good to be here, and listening to the birds, which were all awake and already singing the morning song which he had learned to know so well. And some descended swift through the air, and perched close to him upon the steps of the altar and on the lower pinnacles, and sang as if to burst their throats in a tumult and outcry of joy. Blessed creatures, little children of God! he followed with a smile one that came almost within reach of his hand. And then his eyes were drawn again to something white and wonderful which lay as he lay upon the floor. Some one, he said to himself, had laid an angel's mantle over him as he slept; and there came a rush of soft tears to his eyes, and his heart melted with gratitude and kindness. But when he moved it moved with him, and putting out an astonished hand, he suddenly touched and knew that this

was he—no mantle even of an angel, but the body of a man. Oh, holy house not made with hands! oh, Temple of the Lord!—for this was he.

And a voice said:—

"He hath accepted that which was allotted to him, and acknowledged that it was just; therefore there is now given to him the higher state.

"He hath acknowledged his Lord; wherefore his Lord doth not forget to acknowledge him.

"And here he hath come to seek the face of God, not for himself but for another; wherefore he goes hence blessed, with the blessing he has not sought."

The young man had not gone back half the way to the city of his fathers when he was met by a shining company, all radiant in their best apparel, with music and with song; and in front of all was his brother, whose arrival he had beheld before he set forth. And lo! while all men looked and held their breath, they stood together, two fair young men—fairer than they had been on earth, or than any man is to whom has not been given the house not made with hands. And together they went back to their father's house to do the work which God might give them, whether it was humble or whether it was great, until the day should come when the books shall be opened and all the worlds stand together in their armies and battallions before the face of the Lord. But of that day knoweth no man, not even the Son, but the Father—as was told us by our Lord.

As for the prayer which he made, and which was answered in a way he asked not, it is still unfulfilled; yet they know it is not forgotten, for nothing is forgotten before God.

Watts's pictures has been brought together in London—a collection which, in the present instance, was designed at first to include only such works as had already been presented to the public, or are intended to be offered later for their acceptance. Ultimately, greater scope was given to the scheme, so that an opportunity is now afforded of studying the lifework of incontestably the greatest of the few essentially intellectual painters to whom England has given birth.

It must be recognized at the outset that if Mr. Watts's art is to be understood—I do not say, in the first instance, accepted—his particular standpoint, both artistic and philosophic, must be made clear. No true estimate can otherwise be formed of the manifestation of his art, whether as regards direction of aim or achievement of purpose. That point of view has hardly changed from the beginning when, more than sixty years ago, the young self-taught student picked up an artistic education of a sort in Behnes's studio and derived his first inspiration from the contemplation of the Elgin Marbles. His principles, at least within the past forty years, have never swerved—principles that include the restoration of Art to her true and noblest function, and the personal self-sacrifice of every worker in the commonwealth for the common good. While denying to mere technical dexterity the supremacy over intellectual qualities which it has usurped, Mr. Watts has held—and spent his life in demonstrating—that it is in the power of paint to stir in man something more sublime than is possible to a simple, sensuous appreciation of tones and "values," color and line; and while himself seeking these things in the highest perfection possible to him, and so acquiring the grammar of art, he has sought to express in painter-language the thoughts and emotions that occupy his mind. It is, no doubt, this preacher sense, that often seems to declare itself with the fervency and intellectual force of a Hebrew prophet's, that has overcome his natural modesty

From *The Nineteenth Century*.

MR. G. F. WATTS: HIS ART AND HIS MISSION.

For the second time within fourteen years a great collection of Mr. G. F.

and repugnance for public notice, and has permitted the public exhibition of his collected works, among which a few are still in course of completion.

"*L'art, mes enfants*," Paul Verlaine exclaimed in an oracular moment to his disciples, "*c'est être absolument soi-même*." The epigram is incomplete; but so far as it goes it may be applied to the art of Mr. Watts. Whether noble or ignoble, we usually take a long while to find ourselves out sufficiently to become, even should we dare, "*absolutely ourselves*." But Mr. Watts succeeded early, and has been so much "*himself*" that all schools and movements, from Pre-Raphaelitism to Impressionism, he has seen come and go, and has remained untouched by any passing fashion, though greatly moved by waves of genuine feeling passing over the nation. A glance around the collection of his works reveals the fact that no painter of our time has been more faithful to the tenets of his artistic creed throughout a long career, or adhered more undeviatingly to the path he laid down for himself. It is true that in method of painting we must ascribe to Mr. Watts two main periods: the first, when he displayed in his art the highest technical accomplishment, and, while already devoting himself to subjects having philosophic intent, sought to produce the effect of illusion; the second, when he chose to cast aside the vanity of manipulation for itself alone, and proclaimed the thought as the nobler part of the picture. But since those earlier years there has been no change of direction in respect to technique; nor has the ethical bearing of his art been less steadfastly kept in view than his long-cherished intention to devote himself and the fruits of his labor unselfishly to the service of his fellow-men. These considerations cannot, of course, blind us to faults or stifle criticism, for all the sense of noble patriotism they convey; but they exact, nevertheless, a more respectful attention for the purely spiritual claims of his work than the young bloods whose cry

is "*Art for Art*" are usually willing to allow.

Aspiration and intention—these claim the first consideration of the master. If the thought to be worked out in the picture be but elevated and ennobling, the subject, and even the work itself, are regarded as of relatively little importance; they are his signposts to the thought to be expressed. Then, and only then, is his concern awakened to composition of line and rhythmic beauty (both in the order named, and developed to the highest point of the painter's power or purpose); then to nobility and character of form, with due reference to artistic principles—for it is fitting that the signposts be fashioned as perfect as possible. Finally, color, harmony, and dignity are imported, that the work may result in a monumental whole. But the picture resulting is not necessarily allegorical; it is, more accurately speaking, suggestive.

His aim, therefore, and as a consequence his pictures, are of necessity somewhat vague and visionary, so that absolute completeness is difficult; almost, indeed, a contradiction. The artist is held not less by his imagination than by a strong feeling of what humanity, awakened to a true sense of its dignity, might be, and what it most certainly is *not*—dragged down as it is by ignoble thoughts and unworthy aspirations. "*Divinity in man*," Mr. Watts once exclaimed while asserting this point, "*is like a lamp in a casque; you may let the light shine forth, or you may stifle it, as men generally do, by shutting the vizor down; but it is always there*."

Years ago Mr. Ruskin declared that Mr. Watts was the one painter of thought and history in England. But the artist in a measure repudiates the implied compliment. He makes no claim to be a painter of history. For history painting is not much more than elaborate *genre*, resulting in what are practically "*costume-pieces*" that leave us cold, if not indifferent. He is never, therefore, historical in the accepted sense. Literary he may be; but

even then not simply narrative; and he always maintains the artistic and poetic sense. Yet, whatever his deserts, Mr. Watts seems to care little for consideration as an artist at all—nor as a preacher either, nor as a teacher. He is rather a thinker who would have all men think for themselves; a man of noble dreams who would have those dreams reality; a seer to whom nature has been but partially kind in bestowing on him the gift of elevated conception which he would rather put into words with the pen than with the brush translate them into form. To that cause perhaps we must attribute his passionate desire to raise painting, intellectually, to the side of poetry—*ut pictura, poesis*—and, at the same time, to combat the idea that "Art for Art" is the only principle, or even the best. "I do not deny," he wrote to me many years ago on this very subject, "that beautiful technique is sufficient to constitute an extremely valuable achievement; but it can never alone place a work of art on the level of the highest effort in poetry; and by this it should stand. That any work of mine can do this I do not for a moment claim; no one knows better than I do how defective all my efforts are. But I cannot give up the hope that a direction is indicated not unworthy, and that a vein of poetical and intellectual suggestion is laid bare which may be worked with more effect by some who will come after."

The careful study of Mr. Watts's art, other than landscape, will reveal the fact that it comprises three sections of well-marked distinction. The first is the Realistic, in which, as in the portraits, absolute truth of resemblance is a chief consideration. The second is the Typical, in which, as in "Orpheus and Eurydice," "Eve," and "Mammon," the figures represent types of humanity, pure and simple. The third section is the Symbolical, in which the figures are abstractions. Of this section "The Court of Death," "Dedicated to all the Churches," and "Time, Death, and Judgment" are examples. In addition to these are the exercises in

color and in atmospheric effects, in which the artist has proved a superiority almost lost sight of in the interest of his portraiture and subject-work. But "Uldra," and "The Three Goddesses," with "Off Corsica," and that golden glory representing the sun bursting through the rain-laden atmosphere after the Flood, are in themselves achievements of a remarkable kind and of unusual value; for few now aim at that beauty of prismatic color to which Mr. Watts devotes so much time and happy effort, as Turner in some sort strove before him.

No section of his art, it seems to me, illustrates more completely his strength and his limitations than that of portraiture. It should be understood that, despite the place accorded to him in the public estimation, Mr. Watts is but incidentally a portrait-painter, never having regarded the practice of portraiture otherwise than as a means of study or of supplying him with the wherewithal of doing work of another class less acceptable as a rule to the ordinary collector, and therefore wholly unremunerative. Indeed, under other circumstances it is likely that Mr. Watts would never have been known as a professional portrait painter at all. As it was, however, he was for many years the leading English portraitist of his day, but quitted a lucrative practice as soon as he was placed so far beyond anxieties for the future as prudence demanded.

It is universally allowed that in portrait painting, realism is the dominant note; so that, as Mr. Watts is beyond all else an idealist, it might have been supposed that his greatest quality might have presented itself as an insuperable defect. The fact is, however, that the word "realism" is a term a good deal misused and misapplied. It has been usurped by the modern French school and appropriated generally by an aspect of art so different from that not only of Mr. Watts, but equally of the whole healthy tendency of the English school, that for distinction's sake the quality of his portraiture may best be expressed by the

paradoxical term of "ideal realism," and so cast into danger of being confounded with "idealism" pure and simple. The realism of Holl and Millais may have little in common—at least in later years—with that of Mr. Watts, yet neither painter had admirer more sincere than he. That the first-named was not enough appreciated I have heard Mr. Watts more than once assert, while of Millais he believed that, though he lacked imagination, he was approached by none for brilliant, vital perceptions, nor, except by Velazquez, was ever rivalled by any man who ever lived in the success with which he obtained the aspect of the individual.

But, after all, this excellence, however supreme in itself, does not reach the consummate point of what is possible to the portrait-painter, if the artist stops short at externals. If he gives us a slavish copy, however perfect, of the model's features, unqualified and uncompromising though the truth may be, he gives us but surface truth alone. The lights and shadows that played upon the face in the searching studio light, the wrinkle on the forehead and the wart upon the cheek, would not suffice to satisfy the more thoughtful quality of Mr. Watts's mind. While, according to facial resemblance, all it is in his power to render, he aims chiefly at realizing his sitters' habit of thought, disposition, and character, their very walk of life, as these might reveal themselves upon their face as they sit by their own fireside. Here, then, are the elements of the strength and weakness of the artist's work, fully displayed in the wonderful series of great men and fair women that many consider as his capital life's work. It is obvious that the most common aspect of a man's face, the bare features undisturbed and unlit by any expression, is the most likely to be recognizable; for the most characteristic intellectual expression need not by any means be the commonest, nor that by which the sitter is best known to his friends. It is Mr. Watts's practice thoroughly to study his subject before painting him, not only by simple ob-

servation, but also by conversation on the matters that touch him most, so bringing his worthier self to the surface. Partly for this reason do we find on all the countenances in these impressive portrait-pictures the loftiest expressions of which they are capable, even though in some cases the more obvious resemblance of the features has been somewhat neglected. Partly, I said; for another, an intruding, consideration is to be taken into account—perhaps unsuspected by the artist himself. This is his own personality. He has always shrunk from the pitfall of mannerism and from every trick of method, drawing, or technique, in treatment or in touch, that comes almost natural to a painter; indeed, an examination of the portraits will show that in no two portraits are the noses, for example, painted in the same manner, nor is the drawing of the nostrils precisely similar. But no more than the great imaginative painters of old—all of whom produced portraits, and, moreover, sometimes found in them the initial ideas of their greatest works—has Mr. Watts been able to suppress his own intellect, seek as he would to suppress his individuality. We find as a result this curious circumstance: that while he invariably ennobles every head he touches and lifts his sitter to his own intellectual level, he has fallen short only in the portraits of certain of the greatest of them, with whom he has not been, apparently, in entire sympathy. It is hardly fair to cite the likeness of Carlyle, for that was but a two hours' study, and it has always been the painter's habit not to spare himself in the number of sittings he demands.

His work in portraiture, therefore, shows a strongly marked individuality of an impersonal kind. It has become sculpturesque and monumental in character, and rich in beauty, although the painter never, for all his vogue, has stooped to use that most popular of all portrait painters' color mediums—flat-tery. It is, moreover, so elevated and so imaginative that in his case portraiture is raised far beyond the reach

of Juvenal's sarcastic shaft. Mr. Ruskin has recorded his belief that "Watts's portraits are not realistic enough to last;" but Ford Madox Brown, who himself preferred spiritual to more concrete qualities in portrait-painting, classed them above Millais's by reason of their high level of style and dignity, to which the latter attained not more than once or twice.

Although symbolism is Mr. Watts's most obvious characteristic, it is the characteristic not of the painter but of the thinker. That he has been able to practise it successfully in his art is perhaps the most remarkable of his achievements. When M. de la Size-ramme, disbelieving the possibility of the existence of symbolism not an actual survival, such as we may still find in Germany, declared that he had mounted the staircase of the South Kensington Museum with one set of opinions, and had descended it with quite another, he probably paid the artist a higher compliment than he had any notion of. If Mr. Watts were told (as, in fact, he often has been told) that his work is literary, symbolic, and not to be judged as "art," at all, he would assuredly accept the judgment as welcome praise. The painter's craft, pure and simple, is to him the craft of the painter and nothing more, and its skill, something to employ to good, and not to little, purpose. Appreciating to the full the transcendent power of the old Dutch school in imitative painting, with their miracles of color, luminosity, and shadow, a man of his stamp of mind must naturally deplore that painters who had so completely mastered the grammar and language of their art, failed to use their knowledge to express thoughts, so far as they may be defined as such, other than intellectually childish or unfeignedly vulgar, by which they produced, so far as significance is concerned, nothing more than the results of observation. Francis and Mabuse we may always admire as magicians of the brush, but will they ever take their place beside Michael Angelo? "I would not like to be left in a room alone with the

'Moses,'" said Thackeray of the sculptor's masterpiece: "the greatest figure that ever was carved." The spirit of Thackeray's tribute to the triumph of the influence of imagination over execution is in this instance incense also on the altar of Mr. Watts's art. After all, asks the painter, why should a picture address itself only to the eye? Why should it stop at the retina and not pass on in its appeal to that intellect which governs and includes all the senses? Artistic justification surely lies in the argument that philosophical painting is higher than other forms, by reason of the wider field open for the realization of poetical transcriptions of scenes from life. The idea that the sole object of Art is to please the eye is, he holds, an insult to the sister of Poetry, suggesting as it does a mission of unworthy triviality; and an affront to the intellect of man, by supposing that it can be satisfied with extracting so meagre a yield of gold from so illimitably rich a mine. If our emotions can be stirred by the spectacle of Art "with a purpose," are we still to consider that Art's mission is no higher than to tickle the eye with color, to charm it with dexterity, or—not to do violence to the tenets of the Newest Criticism—to please with skilful rendering of atmosphere, truthful juxtaposition of tone, distinction of "composition," or graceful sweep of line? If we may have these, why not something more? "The opinion that Art can have nothing to do with religious cult," wrote Mr. Watts to me in 1888. "If widely shared by artists and lovers of art, would make any approach to the greatness of former production impossible. The claim of art to an original place with poetry must be upheld, at least by some, and I hope that a band of artists will always be found to fight for this with pencil or with pen. As far as my strength will permit, I will be a standard-bearer."

It may fairly be doubted whether symbolism is possible in these days of material thought, when religion, the true origin of all the highest art, is on the wane. If it be true, as Mr. Ruskin

argues, that symbolism is not invented, but only adopted, there is still invention demanded for the adoption; and as invention is not so rare a thing as poetic imagination, it follows that there may still be hopes for the true symbolism, which is not the insipid allegory masquerading as "decorative art" that we often see. But a symbolic work must be neither anecdotal nor indecisive in its appeal. It must incarnate, so to say, the idea it represents; it must force that idea on the beholder, and awaken in him a responsive emotion akin to that which filled the painter when he conceived it. The picture of a woman with the material attributes of Justice in her hand and around her eyes is only emblematic, until the spectator is filled with a sense of the intellectual attributes of Justice—honesty, firmness, majesty of the Law; and not till then does the emblematic or "significant" work become actually "symbolic." Judged by this standard, Mr. Watts's "Justice" is, to the modern mind, as much superior as an intellectual work to Giotto's, as his conception of the grandeur of Death surpasses Holbein's or Dürer's.

It is one of the greatest merits of these great pictures that they are almost elemental in their simplicity, and that in whatever quarter they may be exhibited they attract alike the cultivated and the uneducated; indeed, during the whole period of their exhibition at Birmingham the great gallery, it was reported, was "always crowded, often impassable." It is not only that there is a strong feeling among the populace for the ideal, the elevated, and the allegorical; it is also that Mr. Watts's art contains in itself so many sympathetic elements. It is Greek in its philosophic spirit and in its display of material beauty, and Christian in its clear appeal to man's righteousness and love. "Greek Art," said George Henry Lewes, "is a lute, not an organ." Mr. Watts's art includes the strains of both, and the painter's dominant ambition—that if his more serious works were viewed during the ex-

cution of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," or during the reading of the Book of Job or "Paradise Lost," they might be felt in harmony and keeping—is in the case of most persons likely to be realized. Moreover, his art, not wholly unlike Kaulbach's, though more mysterious and far more elevated in conception, has a touch of German mysticism. It has not a little of the romance and fancy of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, with added solemnity, both of purpose and feeling. It comes into tangential touch with Rossetti in artistic sentiment and poetry, but it is altogether free from sensuousness. Blake is perhaps nearest to him in imagination, but furthest from him in ordered thought and power of execution. In Mr. Watts the public find the artist, poet, moralist, and preacher in one, and therein lies the secret of his popularity.

Leaving untouched for the moment the debatable ground of the place of allegory in art, we must admit, I think, that Mr. Watts is the greatest symbolist who in this country has ever used paint to express his ideas. If comparison be made with all who have attempted it, from Reynolds to Leighton, no doubt of his supremacy can be entertained. They touched their subjects; he touches his spectators. For he seeks not only abstract beauty, but beauty of idea and spiritual truths—essentially the beauty of morality and of thought; not as a preacher merely—for he does not seek to be didactic—but as a poet. Examine, for example, the smaller picture of "The Rider on the White Horse" (for his sketches are often superior in inspiration and spontaneity to the large works elaborated from them), and compare his realization with the text in "Revelations." His horseman is indeed riding forth "conquering and to conquer;" but not as other painters have represented him—with jaw set and fierce and lowering brow. Mr. Watts's "Rider" full of power and majesty, has the self-reliance, the benevolent repose of a conscious divinity—a figure that none but an epic poet could have conceived.

Lyrics he has given, too, in symbols conceived in a lighter vein—playful subjects thrown lightly off “as the musician runs his fingers over the keys.” The artist’s motto, “Remember the Daisies,” in itself touches a keynote in his love for symbol; and the feeling revealed for the beauty of lowliness, and sympathy with down-trodden humility, are pictured in the phrase.

His great symbolical canvases, then—his “Court of Death,” “Love and Death,” “Love and Life,” “Hope,” “The Messenger of Death,” “Mammon,” “Vindictive Anger,” “The Minotaur,” the synthetic series of “Eve,” and the rest, as well as his great sculptures, “Hugh Lupus” and “Physical Energy”—are intended to present a series of reflections of an ethical character, a pictorial Book of Ecclesiastes, or Omar Khayyam with a liberal admixture of spirituality. They are inspired by a sense of the loss in Art, at any rate in England, of the seriousness which we feel to dominate the great art of Greece and of mediæval Italy; hardly less by the absence of any echo of the best and noblest side of our English national life. The Parthenon, with its great statue of Pallas and the Panathenæic Frieze, embodied the national character, spiritual and physical, of Greece generally, and of Athens in particular; and equally did the mediæval art of Italy interpret the national life of the age. With the exception of Hogarth, Reynolds, and Old Crome, few of our artists have reflected by seriousness of style the true qualities of the English character. Whatever reservations we may make in respect to Mr. Watts’s view of the functions of art, we cannot withhold from him the acknowledgment due to his patriotic achievement, nor allow to pass without a word the willing sacrifice, worthy of San Giovanni da Fiesole himself, of a great fortune and public honors which the endeavor entailed. Just as his art has been worked out simply, quietly, and thoroughly, so his influence should be deep and lasting.

As a painter of reverent emotion Mr.

Watts is a Fra Angelico without the profession of religious faith, repudiating the narrower construction of Prudhomme’s contention that “Art is a Priesthood.” It is to be observed—a remarkable circumstance in a painter who has devoted a lifetime to ethical and religious thought—that he has never dealt with dogma or doctrine. So unsectarian is he that he has always avoided in his works even the ordinary theological emblems and symbols; indeed, not so much as a cross is to be seen in any of his pictures. He paints Righteousness, but not Religion; and personifies Sin, but never as the Devil; nor has he ever given us an “Enemy sowing Tares,” such as we have had from Millais, from Overbeck, and even Félicien Rops.

“You must not speak of my ‘theology,’” he said once, when I let fall the word; “it should rather be called religious philosophy. For I do not admit that Reason can be banished at the behest of belief. I might illustrate my meaning by holding up my hand when such a contention is advanced, and tick off on my fingers ‘Faith,’ ‘Veneration,’ and so on; but those fingers cannot effectively grip or grasp till the thumb, Reason, completes the whole.” It is wholly absurd to suggest that he is a “mystic,” as he is sometimes reproached. He doubtless believes that there is something mysterious—the spirit of a great Creator—in all living things; and most of all in man as the greatest brain power and intellect. “It may shock you,” he said on another occasion, “but I feel that one creed is as good as another, and that Nature—Divinity—Humanity are to me almost convertible terms.”

From this philosophic love of humanity springs the fervid, almost passionate, earnestness with which he seeks to combat the Greek idea of Death—of Death the Destroyer; of the grim and grisly spectre of Dürer’s “Dance.” His obvious aim has been to impress us with a theme to which he returns again and again in his more

lofty compositions; giving us, not Death itself, but rather the Angel of Death; inevitable, inexorable, irresistible, but stripped of the dread and horrors with which painters have loved to invest it, like Prempeh in his "Sacred Grove." The conventional skull and cross-bones view, which, I suppose, attained its fullest development in the weird, infernal *masque* designed by Piero di Cosimo for the Florence carnival, and which, with its decked-out terrors, and its "screaming horror's funeral cry," is made more awful than death itself, Mr. Watts from the first set himself to supersede by a more reasonable and philosophic belief. He ranged himself by the side of the elder Drelincourt and of Michael Angelo. "If life be a pleasure," said Buonarroti, "so death should also be, for it is given to us by the same Master." Just so Mr. Watts, almost alone in his day, has given us, in a dozen canvases, Death the Consoler—the messenger from whom, it is true, there is no escape, yet who is neither ungracious nor unkind—now as a beautiful maid, as in "Time, Death, and Judgment," now as a gentle nurse, as in "Death Crowning Innocence," or, again, as a dignified Presence, as in "Love and Death." The first-mentioned picture may, I think, profitably be compared with Holbein's woodcut known as "Knight, Death, and the Devil," the composition of which it greatly resembles, when the enormous spiritual superiority of the English master's conception will at once be apparent. "Death crowning Innocence," with a golden aureole of purity has solaced many a bereaved and afflicted mother; and this fact I know—although some may laugh—has been a reward far more precious to the painter than any praise that men could heap on its beauty of line, its merits of technique, or its dexterity of handling.

The general respect for this dexterity finds little response in Mr. Watts's artistic philosophy. That he could be as dexterous as any, we may ascertain from the study of his early pictures. But he has long since cast it aside, and

forsworn it as a vanity; despised it, as all vanity should be despised, when it is intended as mere display, as most dexterity must nowadays be allowed to be. Merely dexterous painting—as most modern "impressionistic" painting is—offends against Nature and her laws, for Nature is not dexterous, but produces slowly, by gradual evolution. What comes in a flash, goes in a flash, and, as a rule, is flashy in its essence. Dexterity, according to Mr. Watts, is a very fine thing in the hand of an artist, but if not backed up by a poetic imagination, or by a sense of—and striving for—nobility, it makes a mere painter of the man who has it; a craftsman, and nothing more. The fine colorist can no more secure the greatest triumphs by swift painting than the great miniaturist reached perfection by cold calculation. It is, indeed, more than doubtful whether obviously dexterous work, however good, can give lasting pleasure; it will astonish and please for a time, but it will never be loved. To be successful, the appearance of ease must not be apparent or obtrusive; and if not apparent it is of no consequence if the excellent result is due to *brutera* manipulation or to heart-breaking pains. But pains are likelier to produce a fine picture than dash, in the representation of the fullness and loveliness of Nature. The matter lies deeper than the "reverence" for which Mr. Ruskin pleads; it lies in the strength and weakness of the human character itself. Manifestations of artistic power must above all be sincere, and sincerity and love of superficial effect are hardly compatible with one another. This distrust of mere dexterity, with its final abandonment by Mr. Watts, finds its counterpart in the case of the great French original engraver, Monsieur A. Lepère. In the beginning his work was intensely modern and "clever," for to him modernity and cleverness seemed the all-in-all of art. Yet in spite of the success he achieved—so far as public recognition and applause constitute success—his sincerity as well as his mental development gradually modi-

fied his views, until he finally came to regard them with suspicion and with scorn. He accordingly simplified his handling of wood engraving and etching as Mr. Watts simplified his painting, and habitually refers to "virtuosity" as "despicable." Some critics, especially foreign critics, condemn Mr. Watts for the lack of the very quality he has purposely forsworn, and foolishly dismiss his technique as that of a "barbare." So did they dismiss one of the greatest of their own painters, whose chief excellence Thackeray had the wit to appreciate. "M. Delacroix," said he, "has produced a number of rude, barbarous pictures; but there is the stamp of genius on all of them, the great poetical intention, which is worth all your execution;" words, some of them, which might have been written of Mr. Watts himself.

It is in his treatment of the nude that Mr. Watts rises to the fullest expression of his art as a painter. With him the nude does not represent simply the unclothed: in the first instance, during what I would call his *Second Manner*, not even actual flesh. The primary intention is the rendering of "types of humanity," the employment of the human body to personify an idea—a purpose which would, of course, be utterly defeated by the particularizing use of draped figures. By eliminating from it all the elements of reality, and by infusing into it that sense of "style" which pervades all his work, even the least successful, the painter brings his representation of the nude nearer to the flesh of Titian than any English painter, except Etty at his best, who ever lived. At the same time, it has even less of the quality of looking-glass reflection of the figure than we find in the great Venetian; for, while it affords an opportunity for the most subtle handling of color in all the range of art, it is purposely employed by Mr. Watts only as the most expressive of all symbols, "clothed in the garment of perfect purity." M. Chesneau was probably right when he declared the artist who produced "The Three Goddesses" and "Orpheus and

Eurydice" to be the only Englishman who combined an appreciation of the nude in art with the ability to portray it. More than the texture and the infinite variety of color of flesh is attempted—qualities which are subservient in the estimation of a painter whose ambition it has been to look primarily, as Phidias did, for the form and dignity of the human structure, with its monumental character, its power, and its fascinating play of muscle. The small, half-length "Ariadne," Madox Brown—by no means an over-indulgent critic—declared to be "as fine as a fine Etty;" but other works better display that grandeur of form and composition which Lord Leighton so warmly admired as the quality rarest of all gifts among English painters.

Into the technique of Mr. Watts's painting it is not needful here to enter, either to criticise or describe. But in explanation, not in excuse, of the artist's occasional departure from academic proportions (which many decry as one of the seven cardinal sins in art), it may be said that, while correct anatomy and excellence of figure-drawing are no more despised by him than by any other master, accuracy, as such, occupying his attention in a minor degree than the main lines of his composition, must yield (if it clash) to the dominating significance of the work. Even here he follows Michael Angelo, who, when he drew figures from nine to even twelve heads high with the sole object of securing a certain beauty and grace not to be found in the natural body, retorted to his critics that a work should be measured with the eye, and not with the hand; "for the eye, and not the hand, is the judge of a work of art."

There are qualities in Mr. Watts's pictures to be looked for other than the purity and range of color—the variety of texture which is needed to support the movement of light and atmosphere in a picture—the broken surface, which other artists so carefully avoid—the outline which is never insisted on, and is only lost to be found

again—and, above all, that mystery which, as a quality in painting, is the one vital superiority which modern art can boast over that of the great masters of old. There may be little display of humor in the work, though plenty of playful fancy. To be a wit, a man must have a quick head and a sluggish heart. In that sense Mr. Watts is no wit. His art is the picture of his life: a life in which independence of character and elevated thought throw into relief the highest philanthropy and patriotism of the perfect citizen—a life which is sustained in its sad outlook upon the grim and threatening future by a simple faith in his fellow-man—like the star shining in his picture of "Ararat," or the lyre-string answering to the maiden's touch in his masterpiece of "Hope."

M. H. SPIELMANN.

From The Contemporary Review.
ETHICS AND LITERATURE.

Whatever men and women disagree in, they must surely be at one in regarding morals as the dominant interest of human life. When we say that a person is not literary, not political, not scientific, we mention a fact concerning him. When we say that he is not moral, we convey a warning against him. To lack an interest in any of the three subjects just mentioned is to be subject to a great limitation of human interest; to be indifferent on the subject of morality is to be not in the full sense human. Ethics—to name morality in its intellectual aspect—is to all other subjects of human attention what England is in India, what Rome was in the ancient world. It has subjects, allies, and foes. It does not, in the full sense of the word, acknowledge an equal.

But it is also true that moral interests can be sharply distinguished from no other interests known to humanity. We should lose much of what is most effective in literature if we were to set

aside definite moral writing. Look only at the literary productions of this century. Carlyle and Ruskin are great preachers just as much as they are great writers. Carlyle preached the gospel of work. All that was best in him and all that was worst in him concentrated itself at the heart of this lesson; his noble peasant sympathies found here a fearless, what we might call for want of a better word a patriotic, utterance; here he won his native soil, here his ancestral virtues proclaimed themselves. And then too whatever is worst in him finds here its explanation. His defence of slavery must be regarded, if we would keep any sympathy with him, as a distorted expression of his belief that the habit of work is of greater value to the worker even than personal liberty. Ruskin exalts the duty of the work on another side. He has permanently elevated and ennobled the task of the artist, and allied it with lessons that go to the depth of our nature. The poetry, the vividness, the musical associations with which Carlyle has enhaled the prosaic virtue of industry, have been by Ruskin impressed on the almost equally prosaic virtue of honesty; he has given art new meaning by flooding it with the moral associations of truth. No pulpit has been the focus of teaching more directly moral than the writings of these contributors to what is, in its purest sense, literature.

But both these eloquent preachers belong to a world which has passed away. Though one is still with us, and not very old, we all feel him a survivor of a vanished school of thought. He lived through that intellectual revolution which, in bringing forward new conceptions of that which *is*, partly changed and partly eclipsed the old conceptions of what *ought to be*; but his best work was achieved before the influence of this revolution was felt, and we breathe in his writings the atmosphere of a bygone time. There is a different spirit in every writer of our day. Literature has turned from the study of ideals to the copy of any sufficiently distinct experience. Mark this

change in the succession of what might be called the laureateship of fiction. If any one had been asked, thirty, or even twenty years ago, who was our first writer in this line, he or she would have answered George Eliot, and at the present day the suffrage would be given for George Meredith. The first writer, amid all her rich and varied claims on attention, is specially significant as the exponent of an age of transition. She was steeped in scientific ideas, but the tone of appeal in her earlier works suggests a morality of the old-fashioned stamp. Adam Bede preaches a moral that is as old as the relations of men and women, and preaches it in the same spirit as Scott, for instance, in "The Heart of Midlothian." Here we have nothing of the psychological problem; we track the consequences of sin. We could not speak quite so decidedly of her later work, but we still face the old assumptions, and so nearly are they seen through the same atmosphere, that there were many of her readers, and among them those who received most moral stimulus from what they read, who never perceived the difference of fundamental belief.

But when we turn to the novels of George Meredith the least keen-sighted of readers feels a change. Nobody can say, in listening to him, that the thrill of the drama is combined with the edification of the sermon. The tone is that of impartial demonstration, of a respect for fact as fact, of truth in the sense, not of moral claim, but of science, of photography. George Meredith belongs wholly to this side of the great upheaval, of which the "Origin of Species" marked the culminating point. A curious illustration of his non-morality occurs to recollection. One of his most admired representations thinly veils a well-known heroine of actual life, and everybody knows that Mrs. Norton, though an unhappy wife and a passionately admired beauty, was vindicated by the law from such conduct as would have justified a divorce. Of course, this acquittal is mirrored in her ideal portrait. Yet, in one of those little studies which follow the track of great books

like the tail of a comet, I remember the idealized Mrs. Norton being represented as a divorcee. And, although the real woman might have brought an action for libel against Mr. Meredith's admirer, his heroine would hardly be able to recover a farthing damages from any one of us.

The moral question is, in the novel, a matter of detail; it may escape the attention of an interested reader. It is not that way that the author's energies are directed. His sympathies are neither with the law nor the law-breaker, they go in another direction altogether.

If we come down to a younger generation we see the change in a more complete and therefore, perhaps, a less aggressive aspect. But turn to the writer just snatched from us in his brilliant noon, mark the complete non-morality of Robert Stevenson. We have in his novels a tone of entire scientific impartiality; he describes good and bad in the same tones. His one parable indeed has a great moral idea; it has passed into proverbial expression and taken a place apart, but it is no characteristic expression of his mind; we feel it rather the result of chance collision, as it were, between his unrivalled power of expression and an idea, which apart from that vivid power of expression, we may call a commonplace. The idea there so powerfully set forth, of evil as an invader in man's nature, of a true self, which may be libelled and obliterated by impulses belonging, as it were, to a different personality—this has elsewhere but little power over him. He seems to take it as a fact like other facts, not one holding the clue to the explanation of all. His elaborate painting of a vulgar and loathsome wretch in "Ebb Tide," for instance, represents what in actual life would be altogether repulsive; its interest is due merely to the verisimilitude of the portraiture. We feel this most when we reach ground haunted by the presence of the Wizard of the North. The story he has left half told would have been full of pathos as Scott would have told it. As Stevenson has told it

the interest is that of a problem in heredity. The son of a weak, loving, pious mother, and a coarse, strong, hard father inherits a bewildering moral equipment, and we follow his history as the development of this blended heritage. It is a theme specially interesting to our time, and could not find more skilled and finished treatment, but if we read it immediately after any of Scott's stories we should be struck with the change of moral atmosphere. Scott could not have described the brutal jeers with which the father, a judge known to all readers of his (Scott's) memoirs, pursues the criminal towards the gallows without betraying some touch of sympathy with the wretched victim. Had he made Lord Braxfield a figure in fiction, as Stevenson has done, he would not have recorded these scoffs and jeers, together with the bitter protest of the son, and left them as equivalent representations, each of which has its place. Nor would he have described the poor insignificant mother, with the cold scorn which defines the wife of Lord Weir of Hermistoun. If the object of fiction be to produce the effect of a moral photograph Stevenson is right to leave the impression. Mrs. Weir would probably have impressed us in life much as she does in the novel, if we had looked at her impartially. Perhaps that is not very unlike the way Lucy Ashton would have impressed us if she had lived to be elderly, and we had looked at her impartially. That is the truth of science; it shows us what good eyes could see anywhere and always. It does not convey any personal stamp on its deliverances, it does not show us what one person can see and not another, both being in an equally good position for observation. It is impartial and a school of impartiality. And as we should expect, no writer exhibits more of this quality than the one who, although to our great loss he already belongs to the past, is actually the latest born.

The similarity of his material to Scott's, and the contrast in the moral effect of the two writers, show us the change which has come over the spirit

of literature in our own time, from its approach to the spirit of science. In passing from the writer who died two generations ago to the writer who died two years ago we pass from the world of ideals to the world of penetrating observation and careful classification. No doubt Scott's is a conventional ideal; he accepts the old types and the traditional morality. Yet no one ever felt him cold. With the younger writer, when our attention is most aroused, we are still aware of a sense of chill, of remoteness. We look at everybody from exactly the same focus. It is not that Robert Stevenson has less power of making us feel what he wants us to feel than his great predecessor; on the contrary, he takes much higher rank as a master of style; on his pages you will not find a slovenly expression anywhere; you may find them everywhere on the pages of Scott. If the polished writer rather entertains than touches us it is neither because he is unable to convey what he himself feels, nor because he chooses objects which do not admit of much feeling, but because he takes us to a point of view remote alike from sympathy or antipathy.

The artist was wont to unveil the pathetic in the insignificant; he inspired pity, where the world exhibits only matter for scorn. He sought to reveal where the historian could only narrate. When we track the footsteps of evolution we must beware of describing any change as mere deterioration. But Scott at any rate will, we suspect, be felt by posterity a truer artist than his countryman. For the moment, no doubt, he who echoes the exact dialect of the hour is easiest to read. There is, for the average reader, something of the same effort in reading Scott that there is in reading a book in a foreign language. He wrote when all morality was revolutionary or conventional, and there was no question which side he would take. But his sympathies, if not wide reaching, have a kind of expansiveness which we may express by calling them truly catholic. In the sense that you might make a long list of valuable interests unrepresented in his

writings, you may say that his work is narrow. In that sense you may say that Shakespeare's is narrow. The protest which all readers would make against the description in either case expresses much more truly the actual characteristics of the thing described. Scott's sympathies are not with everybody. But no limits of class or creed confine them—they are with high and low, rich and poor, the law and the law-breaker. No picture is more dramatic than that of Rob Roy. We feel our heart drawn to the robber chief, we are shown his human side, we feel him a brother. But we see his figure against a background of law and order, and his relation to that background is never absent from the mind of the artist who thus presents it. In some deep sense the Highland cateran belongs to that background; his lawlessness is a mere incident in his career. Scott never exalts mere turbulent strength; his readers are always reminded of the claims of the lowly and the poor. The springs of pity are always kept alive; he brings home to us the appeal of failure, the poetry of lost causes, the religion of a loyalty to the unfortunate. And at the same time his sturdy common sense always sees the justification for success. This double range of feeling gives him exactly the point of view for the dramatist. His imaginative sympathies were with Mary Queen of Scots, with the Jacobites, with the Highlanders, with the Roman Catholics. His reason was on the side of the Revolution of 1688, with the Protestant dynasty, with shrewd Scotch lawyers and eighteenth-century ideas. Here is a span giving the true conditions of artistic feeling. The man who sympathizes with opposites is almost of necessity a dramatist, for we need almost nothing in order to see life dramatically than to see it as it looks to both of those who, feeling strongly, lack sympathy with each other.

We speak of the universal sympathies of Shakespeare, but they are not universal in any other sense than this. In truth, we should feel any modern novelist who worked within so re-

stricted a framework as his, extremely narrow. The range of his art leaves untouched a large part of human interest; many people lead full and useful lives, and never know anything of a single emotion made immortal by his genius; many men and women live and die and know nothing of passion, of love in his sense, of hate in any sense, of jealousy, of ambition, of military fervor, of hero-worship, of the feelings that prevail in the court and the camp, of the emotions that thrill the hearts of lovers. When we have finished our list of his themes on the most exhaustive pattern, we shall still find that we have left uncatalogued more than half the interests of life. Probably it was a larger proportion of the interests of the poet's contemporaries than of ours, but human nature is not narrower in one age than in another, and moreover we know of keen interest in Shakespeare's age which he does not mirror. He lived at the high tide of the Reformation, and he never gives us a Catholic or a Protestant; he lived in the full current of the Renaissance, and he never represents a student or a printer; he lived when the artist was an honored guest at courts, and he never introduced an artist. Is it, then, by stupid flattery that we talk of his infinite variety? By no means. It is because within this narrow range his sympathies are absolutely elastic. He makes us sympathize with Macbeth, and with the enemies of Macbeth—with Julius Cæsar, and with the murderers of Julius Cæsar. He paints the conqueror of Agincourt, and he echoes the remonstrance of his rank and file; he gives a voice to the triumph of St. Crispin's Day and the dim protest of the multitude by whose forgotten sufferings such triumphs were won. We have not quitted the enclosure of war and ambition, we have touched on a world which not one in a thousand enters, but yet we suggest, in thus describing it, the thing we mean by the infinite variety of Shakespeare, because it affords a vivid picture of his reversible sympathies. To paint Henry V. and the soldier "afear'd there are few die well who die in battle," is to be catholic.

To collect the sentiments of every trade and every interest is to be merely heterogeneous.

The confusion by which catholic sympathy is mistaken for general impartiality is, as we pass beyond it, deeply instructive. We see that the width of range which we had supposed universal, though it take in but a small part of life, if we reckon life by days and hours, is yet an inclusive unity. What gives breadth and expansiveness to sympathy is not the readiness to go out in every direction and put oneself in the place of everybody, but that habit of mind by which, in all relation, our attention is ready to pass from one set of claims to their opposites. The possibility of dramatic effectiveness is lost when we insist on seeing everything from the same point of view as that from which we should regard action which we had any chance of influencing. If we will never lend our sympathies to actors whose deeds in actual life we should have done our utmost to prevent, we withdraw from all literary judgment. But we withdraw from it equally if we lend our sympathies to everybody. That is another way of saying that we give them to nobody. When literature exchanges the selective touch of morals for the collective grasp of science she abandons her true vocation. If she fail to supply a school of sympathy, and do not teach us to look at some characters more penetratingly than others, she leaves unfulfilled the office assigned to her in the noble words of Bacon—"to give the mind of Man some shadow of satisfaction, the world being in proportion inferior to the soul."

Look at this power in the delineation of the only hero known to Shakespeare's readers whom the world reckons among its greatest men. The blow that removed the true ruler of the world, and gave it up to a welter of civil war, was surely as great a crime as if it had been animated by selfish ambition, and indeed the interests of a tyrannical oligarchy hardly deserve any other name. That is the point of view of Dante, who puts Brutus into the deepest hell. But that is not the point of

view of Shakespeare. He sympathizes with both sides. Brutus has been called the hero, and Brutus is certainly painted as what we should call a good man in almost a modern sense of the word. "This was the noblest Roman of them all" is the verdict of the avenger of the man whom Brutus has murdered, and every touch in the portrait illustrates the eulogy of Antony. The struggle is not one of sin and righteousness; it is rather one of righteousness against righteousness—it is a conflict of forces, both of which have their place in the government of the world. It is in this struggle of virtue with virtue that the poet has most to teach us. Here we find most adequately the escape from the pettiness and aimlessness of life, and take refuge in a "more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety."

This is the point of view of Greek art; it is that balance of alternate sympathy, so utterly unlike the languor of an equal sympathy, which gives us the greatest creations of the Attic stage, and whenever we have a true art we discern something of the elastic swing and balanced poise of moral view which is characteristic of all the work of the artist people. But no other Shakespearean play is as Greek in this respect as "Julius Cæsar." The one which most resembles it in incident—"Macbeth"—most differs from it in spirit. We have another ruler struck down by his friends, another murderer visited by the spirit of his victim, and perishing under the attack of that victim's avengers, but the moral effect is so different that "Julius Cæsar" never reminds us of "Macbeth." A study of conflicting duties is not recalled by a study of crime and remorse. Macbeth is a second Adam, linked with a more potent Eve; the whole drama is the working out of the Nemesis of a crime. Perhaps no writer of our own day would venture to be as definitely moral as Shakespeare is here. It would seem, to contemporary taste, uninteresting and commonplace to commit oneself, as he does here and sometimes elsewhere, to a lesson which might be enforced in

a sermon. It is the more striking because in "Macbeth" our whole interest is concentrated on the criminal pair. The other characters are less distinct than is usual with Shakespeare. Macbeth himself is the creation of Shakespeare perhaps most familiar to us; his speeches have all become quotations, and except from him and his wife we remember little. They are perfectly united; Macbeth never echoes the reproach of Adam; he accepts the responsibility of his own deed. Their common crime does not dissolve their union. Yet the self-multiplying character of crime is brought home to us at every step; every speech of Macbeth's reminds us that a murderer is condemned to commit more murders. Every fact in the actual history which excused the original crime is obliterated; some which exacerbate its guilt are added. Can it be that Shakespeare wished to hint that the great queen, who had lately finished her career, had been haunted by any of Macbeth's misgivings? that the mother of the sovereign on the throne in 1606, when "Macbeth" was first acted, was avenged by the darkening thoughts of Elizabeth's old age? We can only say that, if any such idea was in his mind, the play is a very telling expression of it. A Scotch sovereign, who had sought hospitality and found death, is amply avenged in the drama. Whether such vengeance in life was hinted at we have no means of deciding.

There is something remarkable in the character of Macbeth's remorse which I do not remember ever to have seen noticed. Shakespeare's authority, Holinshed, makes Macbeth a patron of the Church. But in the play no religious feeling is introduced, and the only approach towards confession is made, not to a priest, but to a doctor. His first expression, in confronting his deed, "We'd jump the life to come," is in harmony with his feeling throughout; his crime has awakened no terrors connected with a future judgment, and the supernatural visitants seem entirely to belong to that elder system of belief with which the name of one (Hecate)

connects them. And, except in presence of these supernatural visitants, the feeling in his mind is not horror so much as a sense of futility, of a shadowy, unreal environment, which seems to date from the very moment of his crime. From this instant

There's nothing serious in mortality;
All is but toys: renown and grace is dead.

These words are spoken by Macbeth in his histrionic character as representing the mourner of the man whom he has murdered, but all his actual utterances are in harmony with them—they set the keynote of all that follows. We hear in every well-known line the echo of Pindar's summary of human destiny. "Man is the shadow of a dream." It seems as if the prophecy that he was to have no royal posterity was the expression of a wider doom, "Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown"—a sense of utility is over everything. "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well" sums up the meaning of life and death to him. When he hears of the escape of Fleance he is "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd;" at the news of invasion he feels that his "May of life is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf," and perhaps the best-known speech of his, his address to his wife's doctor, seems rather the utterance of some oppressive consciousness of a mental invalid than the apprehensions of an unmasked criminal. "Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow," he appeals to the physician, while a foreign army is on his land, and this and all his deeper utterances lead into a realm different from that which the actual exigencies of life suggest. We are led to think of him as a noble nature which has somehow lost its way in life, and finds itself amid unfamiliar environment and forced to use a strange tongue. This, Shakespeare seems to say, is the true lesson of remorse. Of course, the external dangers of the unmasked criminals are there also, but all that most appeals to us in the play seems to have nothing to do with them. It is the cry of the soul which has lost *itself* which reaches us. The lesson of the play is not that if a man reaches

the throne through murder he will perish on the battle-field. That is the natural death of a soldier. It is rather, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

If we attend to the moral of the two plays we shall discover a wonderful harmony between them. One seems to answer to the other. Julius Caesar inverts the lesson that it profits a man nothing to gain the whole world and lose his own soul. In him we have the whole world against the soul of a hero. "We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar," says Brutus, at the beginning of the struggle, and, at the conclusion, his dying exclamation records the discovery:—

O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet.
Thy spirit walks abroad, and sends the sword
Into our proper entrails.

What has it profited his murderers that they have gained the whole world? His soul is stronger. Its appearance in the realm of the visible is but a lifting of the curtain; he is present throughout. His true presence, in fact, begins only with his death. The living Caesar is kept faint and ineffective to leave no rival for the spirit of Caesar. We are forced to ask, "What shall it injure a man if he lose the whole world and keep his own soul?"

When we note the different combinations in this theme of ambition, crime, and remorse, as it appears in other forms, we understand what is meant by the infinite variety of Shakespeare. In one sense there is no third-rate writer of our day who has not more variety. These broad, simple elements reappear again and again; they are not diversified by any striking variety of occupation or of social range. Yet no typical figure reminds us of any other. The king in Hamlet comes very near Macbeth in all the circumstances of his career. He has robbed a monarch of his life and his throne and set aside his natural heir, and a similar vengeance overtakes him; but we are never reminded of Macbeth. The play is often spoken of as its extreme contrast, and the effect is almost

as different as if it were by a different author. Hamlet, the most Shakespearean of Shakespeare's plays, one which mirrors a wider range of character and a more elastic variation of sympathy than any other, is yet pervaded by its own peculiar feeling. The play seems lighted up with pathetic meaning when we remember that it bears the name of Shakespeare's early lost son; a father's grief seems reflected in a son's mourning. Love, in the ordinary sense, takes a secondary place. No figure is more pathetic than Ophelia; but Hamlet's love for her is not the dominant feeling in the play, it is thrown into the shade much as it is often in life but very rarely in fiction. The interest of the play is somewhat detached from its main incident, by its slow movement, its varied scope. Its excursions into diverse fields of thought and art at times divert our attention from the murder which forms its main-spring; and though we are always brought back to it, we yet are able to drop it out of attention in a way in which we can never forget the crime of Macbeth. It is in a sense modern in its spirit, as the other belongs, in its scheme and spirit, to the feeling of the old world.

And yet, by what we may call a curious accident, it is this essentially modern play which in its framework of incident and character almost exactly recalls the legend worked by all the Greek dramatists into a story of murder and of revenge. Both Hamlet and Orestes have to avenge a father's murder. In both cases the murderer is the mother's husband, the suggestions of illicit love, of ambition, are present in both. And the avenger in both cases is set aside by the murderer, so that he has his own wrongs to avenge as well as his father's. But there is almost as much difference as resemblance between the two, and it is very striking to note how all the supernatural elements of the play enforce this difference. Hamlet and Orestes are both righteous executioners of vengeance on the murderer, but when Orestes has done the deed he is himself a prey to the

avenging deities in whom is objectivized the agony of remorse. And though the legend ultimately delivers him from their pursuit and gives the verdict in his favor we yet feel that the point of view from which his act is a crime is part of the whole movement of the tragedy, as we feel that also of the point of view from which the act is a duty. We are again spectators to a conflict not of crime against duty but of duty against duty. The Greek ideal is fundamentally opposed to the absolute. No doubt Orestes is vindicated, and on the whole we feel that the sympathies of the dramatist are with him rather than with Clytemnestra. But still it is on behalf of Clytemnestra that the deities of an elder world appear as the embodiment of the troubled conscience, and it is their appeal which is most effective. And when they are assigned a place on Athenian soil, though they end by pardoning the murderer, we still feel that they express some claim on the part of his victim. Greek sympathy never commits itself finally to either side. It is elastic, dramatic, reversible, to an extent impossible to modern feeling, even in a Shakespeare. Crime has taken new associations since the day of Æschylus, and it is impossible to let its interchange with duty come with the same rapid swing of sympathy. We live in a settled world.

Yet in some sense it may be said that the Athenian drama is more moral than ours. No English audience would attend with the interest always supplied by a Greek audience to a play occupied wholly in working out a moral problem. There is no Greek tragedy which we may not thus describe. Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, all alike concentrate interest on this moral ground. They know nothing of the great feature of all romantic interest; what we call love is, in their delineation of life, either absent, or by its faint presence even more forcibly brings out the different position it now occupies. It was enough for the Athenian to hear, in majestic and musical utterance, the pleadings of that within man which speaks through the conscience. He

needed no dramatic attraction but the claim of opposing moral interests. But between these claims he listened with an impartiality which is impossible to a race formed on the traditions of Christianity. He could give his sympathy to causes which the experience of the race and the lessons of Christianity have excluded from our range of open questions. An Athenian audience was thus both more moral than an English audience, and more unmoral. Perhaps it is this atmosphere of nascent morality which has made the Attic stage a model of poetic endeavor and a school of heroic delineation for all time.

Shakespeare sometimes comes very near this Greek impartiality. We may trace it in unexpected ways. The play which we know as the "Tempest," but should better remember as "Prospero," belongs to this scheme of crime and ambition; the criminal indeed stops short of murder, but the guilt is hardly inferior, and the transportation to an enchanted island seems to bring in the effect of some magical resurrection rather than of escape, some Avillon or Hartz cavern where the hero awaits in mysterious seclusion a summons to revisit the world. The play brings out the elastic sympathy of Shakespeare with a wonderfully subtle effectiveness. The character of Prospero, with all its magnanimity, has yet some touches that make us feel his perfidious brother was not wholly without excuse. Prospero has been an indifferent and negligent ruler, leading in his palace the life of a student, and, as he himself acknowledges, through his own indolence, or at least absorbedness in interests other than his duties,

... in my false brother
Awaked an evil nature . . . he did believe
He was indeed the duke; out of the substitution
And executing the outward face of royalty.
With all prerogative . . . Me, poor man,
my library
Was dukedom large enough.

And then note, too, with what a marvellous truth to nature this lack of the

apostle's virtue of diligence in rule passes into harshness. The touches are so subtle that, except in the relation to Ariel where every one must notice them, they are apt to escape us. But mark how exactly in his narrative to Miranda come the claims on her attention. "Thou attendest not," when we feel she is drinking in every syllable, and truly reminds him, "Your tale, sir, would cure deafness." And then his roughness to Ferdinand, though assumed, has too much echo in his harshness to Ariel not to be symptomatic of something in his character. Observe how, at a critical moment, when Caliban's conspiracy against Prospero is on the point of taking effect, Ariel dare not warn Prospero "lest I might anger thee." His life and more is in the balance, but his irritable nature is more formidable to Ariel than the danger of Caliban's triumph. Prospero himself, in the fifth act, seems to awaken to the sense of his own harshness. Listen to his address to Ariel, and observe whether it do not express something of self-reproach:—

Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply
Passion as they, be kindlier moved than
thou art?
Though with their high wrongs I am stung
to the quick,
Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my
fury
Do I take part; the rarer action is
In virtue than in vengeance: they being
penitent
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further.

All his subsequent utterances are in harmony with this resolution. We seem to pass to the palace of Joseph in Egypt, where a brother, injured in a similar way, welcomes and reassures the criminals with self-obliterating pardon. The lesson is the more effective because it seems that no other character stands so near to Shakespeare as Prospero does. When the play acted by his attendant spirits is interrupted by the conspiracy of Caliban, and Ferdi-

nand asks whether he may think the actors spirits, Prospero answers in words where he plainly speaks for his creator:—

Spirits which by mine art
I have from their confines called to enact
My present fancies.

Are not these as much the words of Shakespeare as of Prospero? And is not a character thus singled out for something more than sympathy in an especial sense an exhibition and exponent of the art of his creator?

Among these

Spirits which by his art
He has from their confines called to enact
His everlasting fancies

none are more instructive as to this catholic sympathy than the only fiend introduced among them. Sympathy with Iago! Can any human being sympathize with the torturer of Othello, the murderer of Desdemona, the fiend who changes an Eden to a hell? Yes, Shakespeare shows us what is the deepest spring of wickedness, as it could be shown only by taking the point of view of Iago. He is the character which most represents the impression of great genius in all the works of Shakespeare. He succeeds in everything he tries to do. He makes Roderigo give up his project of suicide, he makes Cassio give up his resolution against sobriety; he engages Desdemona to plead his cause; he uses every one as his puppet. Iago is painted by Shakespeare as a great power on the side of evil, as Satan is by Milton. He is a great tempter. He incarnates that spirit of suspicion which is the perennial foe of all good. In all art which mirrors life there must be a place for such a being, whether we call him supernatural or natural. It is of the very essence of a moral picture of life that we should attend to the forces of the foe. If life is a battle, the enemy is a part of its *dramatis personæ*. If good and evil are no mere degrees of preferability, but opposing forces, to understand evil is, in some sense, to understand good. No saint, no preacher knows the difference between

the two better than Iago. Hear his description of a good woman:—

... She that was ever fair and never proud
 Had tongue at will and yet was never loud,
 Never lacked gold, and yet went never gay,
 Fled from her wish, and yet said now I may.
 She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind,
 See suitors following and not look behind;
 She that being angry, her revenge being nigh,
 Bade her wrong stay and her displeasure fly—

Have we not there a real appreciation of a womanly ideal, as Shakespeare understood it? And listen to his description of Othello:—

The Moor is of a free and open nature
 That thinks men honest that but seem to be so.

And again:—

The Moor, albeit that I endure him not
 Is of a constant, loving, noble nature.

Observe how truly the character of sin and temptation is depicted in his words:—

When devils will the blackest sins
 put on,
 They do suggest at first with heavenly
 shows.

And he speaks of the poison he is infusing in the same strain:—

Oh, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
 It is the green-eyed monster which doth make
 The meat it feeds on: that cuckold lives in bliss
 Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
 But, oh, what damned minutes tells he o'er
 Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet fondly loves!

What a marvellous picture we have in those words of what it is the whole endeavor of Iago to produce in the mind of his benefactor! What damned minutes tells he o'er; the minutes are as days to him; each passes with a variety

of pain that makes it something individual. "Suspects, yet fondly loves!" there lies the true torture of the heart. Iago has never known it by experience; he has not loved his wife; we will not believe he was ever jealous of her. He knows it by the intuition of genius.

If we turn from Shakespeare's study of jealousy to a work comparable with it, written nearly two thousand years earlier, we shall find the genius transfigured into superhuman power. The Hippolytus of Euripides is not so well known by translations and paraphrases as some other Greek tragedies, but it is very easily suggested to the imagination of an English reader, because it resembles a narrative familiar to us all from our earliest years. The only change we need to make in the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, in order to represent the story of Hippolytus and his step-mother, is to remember the relation of the two last-mentioned. Theseus has taken a young wife, and, in a prolonged absence, her love for his son, Hippolytus, has been betrayed to him by a nurse who longs to save the love-sick Phædra from an early death. He answers her as Joseph answers Potiphar's wife, and in like manner draws suspicion upon himself. Theseus is less merciful than Potiphar, and Hippolytus falls a victim to the wrath of his father, who discovers his error in time to receive the pardon of his dying son in one of the most pathetic scenes in literature. Hippolytus is a more saintly character than any in Othello, but the prototype of Iago is a divinity. Phædra herself, indeed, in so far as she calumniates the man she fails to seduce, is responsible for his fate, but the actual tempter is a goddess—that goddess who reminds us, when we call her the divinity of love, that we use that word to express the highest emotion known to humanity, and also the lowest. The inspiration of passion changed to hate, of despair, of suicide, and then of the credence given to calumny—all this is the work of Aphrodite. Shakespeare exhibits the disaster as the work of supreme human power; Euripides, of superhuman

power. Shakespeare could not have read Hippolytus, probably he never heard the name of the play; but the kindred of genius shows itself in the resemblance between two plays written at the intervals of two millenniums. Shakespeare and Euripides are brothers, though the one was a Christian and the other makes his devil a dweller in Olympus. Euripides, in Hippolytus, is a Christian preacher; he is singled out by a clever Frenchman, Ernest Havet, as an example of the extent to which what we call Christianity is a plagiarism from Greek literature, so that the very association with the name of Christ, in his view, is mistaken. We may go so far in sympathy with this extravagant prejudice as to allow that the true spirit of forgiveness hardly shows itself so effectively in any Christian drama as in its intrusion into a set of Pagan surroundings. What we mean by Christianity is that which makes supreme those claims of pity and pardon seen by the impartial Greek spirit as a part of the varied world of human emotion, and nothing more. But, perhaps as an object for the intellect, we discern these claims most clearly in a form so unexpected.

In "Othello" itself there is nothing of this directly Christian element. But no play is more profoundly moral in its influence. It exactly represents the meaning of those words of Bacon, it shows us the meaning of suspicion as human life does not show it. In the world we do not find either good or evil pure from admixture. We see them entangled, the one confused with the other. Unreasonable jealousy, unreasonable suspicion, has always some excuse. An Iago, in actual experience, would have something to say for himself. And so a large part of the forces of good in this world seem wasted because of their entanglement with the forces of evil. We do not, in life, see the suspicious character clearly exhibited as the foe of good, because it is always more or less justified. We feel that in some sense it is better to trust and be deceived than to doubt and be justified, but the spirit of science tells us that it

is better to know the truth. The spirit of poetry does not contradict the truth of science. It does not paint a weak, blind idolatry and say this is better than a discerning scepticism. It shows a noble nature a prey to suspicion, and leaves on our mind more of the meaning of trust than any picture of trust could do—than any sermon on the duty of faith could do. We feel, as we end the play, that suspicion is blind. We do feel that sometimes in life, and whenever we attain to that conclusion it is as if the clouds parted and we saw the stars. We always discover it with a sense of penetrating through some intervening stratum into an abysmal depth beyond us. But it is not the habitual lesson of life, very often the lesson goes the other way. We cannot say that in this world most suspicion is wasted. We can only say that it is the function of art to provide us with that satisfaction which life withholds except in fleeting gleams; again, to repeat Bacon, to satisfy the soul, as superior to the world.

"The world being in proportion inferior to the soul" does not mean that in fiction the good should be all rewarded and the bad punished, as the average man understands reward and punishment. We do not want to hear that Hamlet succeeded to the throne of Denmark; and that Cordelia led a long prosperous life. But we do want to see something in their fate that the world does not show us. We crave the removal of some veils which disguise for us the true character of good and evil. What we desire is that the same kind of attention should not be given to every kind of character; we need to look at some lives and into others. These are not necessarily the bad and good respectively. The lives of some bad men have more to teach us as to the meaning of goodness than the lives of some good men. Iago is a greater preacher of the duty of faith than the ordinary trusting husband and father is. So far he is a better subject of tragic delineation. We can turn from the slight sketch of an angel to the elaborate portrait of a fiend without any sense of treachery to

virtue because in that elaborate portrait lies a background for such an ideal of trust as we could not gain elsewhere. In actual experience the colors of virtue melt into the shadows of vice. It is the art of the poet which shows each pure, which teaches us that to a great intellect the effectiveness of what is evil becomes an inevitable temptation, that the great sounding-board which this world supplies for all sin and withholds for all goodness, is of itself a provocative to that in human nature which seeks the sonorous, and less abhors the tragic than the commonplace.

Life is confused, art should be distinct. It should supply a respite from the futility of life. We escape from our own sorrows by contemplating other sorrows on a larger scale and of a purer texture. To have to be always making excuses for the bad and always being disappointed with the good, and at last to come to feel as if the classification were inappropriate—this is the discipline of experience. It is not a part of the exhibition of tragedy. Here we have stronger outlines, clearer aims, more elementary passions. It is not that here the contrast of right and wrong is necessarily kept more obviously and inexorably before our attention than it is in the world of experience. It is only that the issue is disentangled from that in life which impedes and confuses it.

But why, we may ask, does Shakespeare never give us a great genius fighting on the side of good? Why not show us one with the power of Iago who uses his power to create good, as Iago uses it to create evil? To ask this question is to ask why we are put into this world. In our earthly experience we do find a relation between power and what is destructive which we do not find between power and what is constructive. We see it everywhere. It is disease, not health, which is contagious. It is mischief, not art, which is suddenly effective. A child may send a stone through a cathedral window which the whole art of our time could not replace in its beauty. A commonplace dema-

gogue may persuade to acts of crime where the eloquence of a great statesman could not persuade to acts of virtue. For what reason good is here and now at a disadvantage it is in vain for us to speculate. Only this we may say with security, if art is to mirror life it must accept this inequivalence of the moral forces in our world. Its legitimate field of creation lies in the comparative purity of its specimens. If it try to ignore the neighborhood of power and evil, as compared with the remoteness of power from good, we shall find its productions all stamped with futility.

But in this very added definiteness of outline a new meaning is given to the conflict of good and evil. If they are necessarily exhibited on the stage of this world as lacking in equivalence, if the forces of evil stand nearer to the world of efficiency and of expression than the forces of good, if we have to see all that is most effective in the moral world allied with evil, so that whenever the deeper emotions of our nature emerge into literature the result is tragedy, this is a truth of life as well as of art; it is only less clear in the transcript from experience than in the creation of genius because everything is less clear in the first than in the last. But art in the mere separation of the forces of good and evil holds a mystic promise of the ultimate victory of good. Its highest achievements always seem to point beyond itself. We do not see the victory given to the good, but we see strength, and we see goodness, and we find a suggestion of their approach which holds a prophecy of their union. Here and now the good are baffled, the triumphant are unscrupulous; but we yet feel that power and goodness are kindred, and that in some world, at some time, in some condition, they shall be allies. The effective thing in this world is evil. Pain is vivid, pleasure is faint. Destruction is easy, construction is hard. But, still in a sense, we feel that there is something temporary in all this. In a sense it is even unnatural. It is perfectly natural in the sense of its being what happens every day; but

something in our aspiration after a blending of the effectiveness of wrong with right seems almost like a memory, and still more like a well-grounded anticipation.

And in the very act of intensifying this association of power and evil, art suggests the association of power and good. As Shakespeare paints an Iago, he suggests to us a being who shall bring to the side of trust the potency which Iago brings to the side of mistrust. Those who in actual life approach Iago do not suggest this, because it is only pure evil which can suggest its opposite, and it is only in art that we recognize evil in its purity. To disentangle from the confusion of life the promise that life hardly utters, of an enlistment of its strongest forces on the side which now they seem most to oppose, is a service which morality can receive only from literature. Science has no hint of such a promise. Politics, and that enlarged view of politics which we know as history, make it seem utterly impossible. Only literature with its disentangling touch brings before us so vividly the opposing forces, ranges their serried ranks in such definite antagonism, that the very nakedness of the problem forced on our attention gives it a certain solution. We see the truth of a saying of Plato's, that the least change of movement is that of inversion. We feel that all this that we see around us might in a moment be discerned as an inverted world, the reflection of some hidden reality—hidden perhaps merely by our incapacity to look upward. Here we have the secret of the satisfaction that is given by tragedy. If events, which in life give unmixt pain, are so refracted through the prism of poetry as to give something for which we have no less inadequate name than pleasure, it is surely because in that refraction we discern some meaning that is hidden from us in their unrefracted form. Power and evil are allies in life, and they are exhibited as allies in art. But seeing them as they are shown in the creations of genius we discern as in a vision, the unnaturalness of their

union, and foretell their separation forever.

JULIA WEDGWOOD.

From The Edinburgh Review.

ROOKS AND THEIR WAYS.¹

Many books have been written about birds, their works and ways, habits, disposition, and character, but above all their song, with greater or less success, from the times of ever-fresh Gilbert White down to these days of cheap compendiums; but, even now, though natural history is a popular pursuit, and though information of a varied and admirable kind is within easy reach of all who care to seek it, few take the trouble to search and observe for themselves. They talk much of the Book of Nature, and yet hardly trouble to turn a leaf in it for themselves; so that ignorance prevails widely, even as to what may be going on in the commonest hedgerow.

As to the language of birds, their ordinary talk, few, even of those who hear it, understand a word. In the four southern counties of England nearly three hundred varieties of birds are to be met with, and of these three hundred not one-fourth are known even by name to the ordinary passerby. Their language is a sealed book. To such happy wanderers, indeed, as Jefferies or "the Son of the Marshes" it is but a woodland dialect, to be heard and easily understood at all hours of the day, and many of the night. Such a student has it at his fingers' ends, if not at the tip of his tongue, mingling as it does with the hum of the wild bee, the chirp of the grasshopper, the murmur of the brook, the rustle of the sedge, or the passing whisper of the idle breeze. And this

¹ 1. *Rooks and their Neighbors.* By J. G. Sowerby. London: 1836.

2. *The Open Air.* By R. Jefferies. London: 1890.

3. *Gleanings in Natural History.* By Edward Jesse. London: 1888.

4. *Bird Notes.* By I. M. Hayward. London: 1895.

though every bird has a special language, well known to his wife and children and all his own kindred, apart from his song, and yet instinct with swift meaning.

Walk down the neighboring wide meadow, by the rookery, where clumps of noble elms still mark where once ran the great avenue up to the manor house. As we pass the old tithe barn, with its roof of red tiling, we note the cluster of starlings, busily in search of insects in every crevice and crack, while three or four of the older birds on the chimney-top are keeping up an incessant babel of small talk, whistling, and singing, that sounds full of fun and laughter. But all at once comes a dead silence. A single note in it has given an alarm. The foraging party all hurry up to the roof, and wait for further orders; the hen partridge in the long grass below has heard the words of the old starling, and with a few soft notes called together her tiny brood to keep close to her, and be ready to be off without delay. A hundred yards away stands a solitary elm, old and withered at the top, with a crowd of leafy branches below, from the heart of which now suddenly come two sharp discordant croaks, utterly unlike the ordinary cry of a rook; but a rook it is, though you can't see him, and he has just said to his friends busily feeding in the next water meadow, "Be on the lookout; there's a strange man coming this way—with a dog." And so well understood is the message of the sentry that, long before we reach the meadow, the whole flock are on the *qui vive*, and ready to take wing at a moment's notice.

Each bird has his own peculiar notes of warning or alarm, of safety or satisfaction; but though these may be generally understood by others not of his own special family, he has his own individual character, habits and traits, which to be known require long, patient, and careful study. For want of this, and of a faithful historian, many a bird has suffered sadly in moral character, and been classed as a rogue, a thief, or a vagabond.

when he little deserved it. And in this respect, perhaps, not one has fared worse than the common barn owl, or the rook, too often confounded with his robber cousin the crow. Even so keen an observer as Shakespeare has been accused of this mistake in the well-known lines:—

Light thickens, and the crow
Makes way to the rooky wood.¹

The word "crow," which in strictness is now used only to describe the carrion crow, was formerly applied, with perfect correctness, to the "rook," the most numerous family of the great *Corvus* clan. And this use of the word "crow," is still almost invariable in Scotland, as well as general in many parts of England. When Shakespeare wrote the "rooky wood" it is probable that he meant the "murky" or "dusky" wood, "rooky" being akin to "reekie." It is clear from the whole tenor of the passage referred to that this meaning accords far better with its sense than by understanding "rooky" as meaning "inhabited by rooks."

It is well, perhaps, that the cause of the respectable rook has been taken in hand by so able an advocate as Mr. Sowerby, who has devoted long years of patient study to his works and ways, and given us their best fruit in the charming little volume named at the head of this article.

As far as we are aware no such student has ever so looked into the private life of *Corvus frugilegus*, done half as much to redeem the character of our old friend, or given us so many glimpses of what he is really like. His book, he says, "has no claim to be considered as a scientific treatise, or a popular natural history, but simply an enlargement of notes, and some few sketches made on the spot by the author." Its value springs from the fact that, with ample leisure at command, the author is a keen observer, delighting in out-door life in the fields and woods, and able to tell us what he saw and heard in bright and happy words.

¹ Macbeth, ii. 3; and see note in the "Cambridge Edition" (1892) of Shakespeare's Works.

always truthful and at times brimming over with humor. To our readers we must leave the pleasure of perusing first-hand the life and adventures of one particular rook, *Corney*, the real hero of the play, with whom Mr. Sowerby was on intimate terms of friendship; though we shall here and there have to refer to some striking points in his biography.

Before, however, touching upon *Corney* himself it must be noted that when he calls his book "Rooks and their Neighbors," by "neighbors" Mr. Sowerby means not only jackdaws and starlings and other such feathered friends, but the author himself, with his children and household; "Boots," the terrier, and even McGregor, the kitten, whose love of sport once led him to climb a lofty elm, and there, to the consternation of the lawful owners, settle himself down in a rook's nest, and there abide for a couple of days and nights, and this in spite of all protests on the part of the birds. At last, after many vain attempts on McGregor's part to reach the ground "his heart always failing him when half-way down," a bowl of milk at the foot of the tree enticed him to a final effort, when, "thin and miserable enough," he rejoined his sorrowing friends below; while for the rest of the breeding season the whole group of nests was deserted as unsafe to live in.

The author's own place of observation was almost as immediate as McGregor's, and more easily attained, being the roof of the house, where, as the branches nearly touched it, he had a good view of all that was going on at the busiest season, though at any other time a mere glimpse of a head above the eaves would send off the whole "black congregation" hurryscurry in all directions. Had it been a crow's nest into which McGregor intruded it is hardly necessary to add that his fate would have been sealed at once. Instead of being an object of alarm he would there and then have furnished them with a hearty supper, in spite of all outcries, or entreaties from friends on the lawn.

That there should be any confusion between the rook and the "crow" is the mere result of a general likeness between the two birds in outward appearance; for they differ not only in habits, but in one special physical feature, that might well distinguish the race of "robbers and plunderers"—"ex raptō vivere nati"—from the other, so often encouraged and cared for as friends. This special feature is that the skin surrounding the base of the bill of an adult rook, and covering the upper part of the throat, is totally bare of feathers—in all birds—whereas the crow has no such bare space. It has been said, indeed, that the lacking feathers are simply worn away by incessant digging for food; but it is hard to believe that Nature would have supplied feathers to be simply in the way, and not to be got rid of without hard toil, and some pain to the owner; whereas they may naturally fall off, and not be renewed, because never intended to grow there permanently; and though digging may have had a hand in the work, yet, as Mr. Sowerby shrewdly says,—

Nature puts the finishing touch on by fixing where the feathers should cease, thus making a neater job of it by ending the bare skin off at a certain point, instead of leaving a ragged patch, as would have been the case if digging alone had removed the feathers.

The robber crow has no marks of abrasion, simply because at the worst of times he has far less hard digging to do; though young lambs are not always to be found, nor young chicks, nor carrion always within reach. To these high delicacies the rook seldom, if ever, aspires; for even at times of dire and extreme hunger his food—in spite of his name *Frugilegus*—mainly consists of insects, worms, and caterpillars, the grub of the cockchafer, the deadly wire-worm, and other such pests.

Now and then complaints are made of his ravages among the turnips, but in point of fact his taste does not lie that way, and the charge is groundless.

as a keen observer (Notes by a Naturalist) clearly proves.

"They've ruined that there crop," said a farmer one day to me; "so I thought, but when I did go up to the ground most of my turnmuts was rooted up, and hollowed out into great holes. They was all eaten out through and through with grubs; but the rooks had been pulling up the roots to get at 'em. I did ought to have looked after that crop of turnmuts myself."

Nine-tenths of the mischief done by the rook are thus caused by his digging at the roots of plants for the grub or larva which, by instinct, he knows to be hidden there. "I have known," says another witness, a whole bed of lettuces destroyed by a single *melolontha*—the grub of the cockchafer—tracing its passage underground from root to root, and finding it at the root of the last in a row, "where a rook would have done me good service by uprooting the first lettuce in the row and seizing the destroyer."

Abundant evidence of this kind might easily be cited, but when all is said *Corvus* has much to answer for. As long as the ground is being prepared for future crops, the more rooks that visit a field the better will it be for the owner. All that they ask is to be let alone. Not so, however, when the seed is sown; for grain of all kinds, pulse, and even potatoes are then eagerly sought for, and dug up with amazing dexterity, so that a whole crop may be in danger, and the bird-boy with his old, half-crazy gun must do his utmost to drive away the thieves. In times of long drought, when the ground is burnt up and hardened into a solid cake, when not a worm or grub can possibly be got at—when "he cannot dig, and to beg is ashamed"—then is "*Corvus*" driven into evil ways by downright hunger, and perhaps by the cries of a starving family. He plunders the kitchen garden or the orchard, the rows of young peas, or any green thing that has in it a drop of moisture. We have, says "the Son of the Marshes," given the rook his due at all times, as one of the farmer's best

friends, "but now and then steal over him evil desires, to which, for want of moral firmness, he gives way, and suffers for it. Who can wonder?" Not even then, that his depredations are very extensive or his guilt heinous, though Miss Hayward, in her pleasant "Bird Notes," protests against rooks as thieves of a godless order. "Two things," she says, "I have lately learned: first, that they know Sundays from week-days; and second, that they are very fond of walnuts."

There was, it seems, within sight of the window a small walnut-tree, on which hung bunches of goodly nuts, that were watched with affection. All through the week they were safe enough, but on a certain Sunday morning down came half-a-dozen sable¹ marauders, settled on the tree, and began operations, though thrice driven away with many shouts of anger. That day week, as the lady sat reading, suddenly among the lime-trees was heard an extraordinary uproar of rooks, "cries between a scream and a croak." Did it mean "walnuts," or was it the mere expression of extreme anxiety, a struggle between a longing for nuts and fear of the nearness of the houses? Be that as it may, down swept the thieves again, and, in spite of all outcries, the tree was stripped of every nut but one—out of reach—and a second hastily dropped on the grass. It is clear, adds Miss Hayward, that

birds take their pleasure, and enjoy an unwonted freedom of mind, during morning church-time; and, knowing this, I should have gathered the nuts before going out, but that my longest rake would not reach high enough to shake the boughs.

Strangely enough, on the third Sunday two robbers again visited the same tree, made a great uproar at finding nothing, and then flew off in despair. "Why didn't they remember that the tree had been stripped?" Why, indeed? for all ordinary thieves

¹ "*Sable*," though Gilbert White tells us of two unique specimens that he found nailed to a barn door whose plumage, bills, legs, feet, and claws were pure milk-white.

have better memories touching all matters of plunder, and birds are often credited with being equally clever in this respect—a fact strongly corroborated by the appearance of the whole troop on the fourth Sunday—but merely to float round over the scene of action, high overhead, with much wheeling about and ominous croaking, as if still “speculating on the subject of walnuts.”¹

As to these “parliaments in the air,” which every observer of country life must often have witnessed, they would seem to be peculiar to the rook. A great flock, all busily feeding in a meadow, will suddenly, without any apparent cause, rise into the air up to a great height, with much vociferous cawing, and at times many curious antics, and then, after wheeling round and round in a tangled crowd for a time, all at once, with almost folded wings, drop quickly down to *terra firma*, and once more assume their usual grave demeanor. What was the reason for or meaning of the conference, what the topics discussed, or what the issue, it would be hard to say. Country folk will tell you that the subject of all the noisy talk is the weather, and that the conclave forebodes rain; but weeks of sunshine often belie the augury of such prophets. We much prefer the notion that after a good dinner the birds merely go up to the drawing-room for a pleasant chat. In like fashion, at sunset, on returning home to the rookery after a long day's toil in distant feeding grounds—unless it be at breeding time—a whole flock will circle round the tops of the tallest trees, with many a winding sweep and a babel of noisy cries, as in the days when a poet wrote of them:—

Et e pastu decedens agmine magno
Corvorum increpuit densis exercitus alis.

As the uproar increases the birds who have been at home all day rise into the

¹ When food is abundant the rook is said to collect and bury acorns, etc., and even walnuts, which of course are more easily cracked after sojourning in damp earth for a month or so.

air to join the revellers, until the whole colony are on the wing, when slowly the busy tongues cease, parliament is dissolved, and the peace of twilight settles down over field and wood for the night. The hours of rest, however, are few; summer nights are brief; and at early dawn all the rooks are awake again, and setting out by detachments in different directions—for the marsh, the water meadow, or the ploughed land—apparently on some plan of route talked over and agreed on before starting. During the breeding season the hen birds are left at home to take due care of the eggs, or the young brood; and this, above all, is the time when the best points in the character of *Corvus* come to light. As a husband, and as a family man, he is beyond praise, coming home at dusk with his baggy pouch at the base of the bill full of luscious dainties which he has treasured for his wife's express enjoyment. Of these domestic scenes no one has given us so graphic a picture as Mr. Sowerby, who in the roughest weather often spent the greater part of many days “up amongst the rooks.”

“One Sunday,” he says, “it had been sleeting all day, when about four o'clock I wrapped myself well up, and climbed aloft through the bacon room—which is in the roof—on to the leads. What a wild scene it was! The husbands, all wet and weary, were fighting their way homewards, away over the whitened fields, with their wives' suppers, pitching and rolling like so many luggers in a gale of wind. And what a hard task was that climb up the last hill for home! Meanwhile, soaked through and miserable, hungry and cross on account of the long absence of their husbands, out come the wives from their dripping nests, to see if they can catch a glimpse of the laggards,” and in a trice the row begins.

Both sides are now in a bad temper, and neither will listen to a word of explanation; she longing for supper and he with a bill so crammed with food that he cannot speak plainly. But by degrees peace is made; the provisions are unpacked, and presently the two are seated amicably side by

side, the one administering and the other with open mouth receiving the choicest morsels of the bag; though not always even then is the lady content. After consuming all the provender she will greedily beg for more, and continue her importunity until her lord and master with an angry peck drives her back to the nest, to attend to her maternal duties. And so at last, in spite of the rush of wind and the sweep of bitter snow, all strifes are at an end, quiet settles down over the wild and clamorous scene, and the anxious parents drop off to sleep.

Not that a rookery at the best of times is one united, happy family. There are, it seems, "all sorts and conditions" of rooks as well as men; figuratively speaking, blacksmiths, "bakers, butchers, publicans, sinners, and all at times in full swing." In some trees—often in the beech—the nests are wide apart, as detached villas. In others they are so closely packed together that it is hard to enter at one door without encroaching on the threshold of the next, as if they all belonged to one family or a party of near relations. But, whether near or wide apart, the inmates are a quarrelsome race; angry words seem to be always flying about, young and old joining in the fray. There is much fighting in the days of choosing sweethearts and wives, quarrelling over the possession of old nests or the building of new ones; much jealousy among rival builders, who if they leave their work for a moment may return to find the whole house plundered or demolished. "In fact," says Mr. Sowerby, "the morals of rooks as to picking and stealing are utterly bad, even when there is every chance of detection."

Nor is it among the married folk only that this love of strife and laxity of morals prevails; for we read of "a rowdy lot of bachelors living together in a large, bushy tree," who spend most of their time in roving about from place to place in a noisy, aimless way, while all the other rooks are busy as bees. Among these vagabonds, even when "all respectable people are

locked up for the night," you may hear quarrels going on, some of them breaking the stillness of the night with their untimely brawls, until, with furious beak and noisy crash of wings, they often fall headlong, clutched together, to the ground. After the combat follows a grand flocking together, and a burst of noisy cawing, and at last peace. Noise is the rook's besetting infirmity. Wise and cautious as he is said to be—and has to be from the first day of his leaving the nest—and easily terrified at the first sound of alarm, over his own tongue he has absolutely no control. From the days of Æsop to this hour it has been so with him, and he seems never weary of hearing the sound of his own "charming croak." Hence follows loss of character, or even of life. One idle note will often betray the whereabouts of a young, callow, and ignorant bird, or of his older and more crafty relative, to the idle gun of the farmer's boy or the more terrible sportsman on the day of slaughter. From first to last his whole career is one of noise and bustling activity.

In March—as a rule—rooks leave their winter roosting-places and begin to think of the coming days of courtship and nesting, the graver and elder couples of the previous season as well as the more ardent youngsters. Tree-tops are examined with a view to a new settlement, old nests inspected and inquiries made as to probable security and safety.¹ Things began early this year, and on February 14, St. Valentine's Day, a party of six settled down on the topmost boughs of a certain giant beech-tree, within hail of the present writer; and for some hours were engaged in a sharp and noisy palaver, apparently as to the merits and possession of a couple of deserted jays' or wood pigeons' nests. The uproar ended at last in both abodes being fairly pulled to pieces.

¹ A raven who builds in a tree invariably chooses the one most difficult to climb; but the rook fixes on that which seems strongest and securest for the future nest and young.—St. John's "Highland Sports."

and the broken fragments left on the bare branches. But strife was renewed on the next two days, when the whole party—now increased to eight—came to terms of united action; and it was decided to found a new colony. The owner of that beech had long wished to see the solitary tree thus happily peopled, and hoped in vain. He had been told that unless the young rooks on a neighboring elm were slaughtered in due season there was no chance for him, but the gallant sportsmen who thus advised were, as usual, in the wrong.¹ *Corvus* came unasked, and in due time four nests were built; nearly a score of young birds were hatched, launched into a stormy life, and for weeks afterwards might be seen coming home at nightfall from some distant feeding ground, after a long day's toil. A little later these four nests were deserted, and until the cold weather began the inhabitants betook themselves by night to a neighboring rookery, where after the usual slaughter there is room and to spare.

Meanwhile, though blackbirds, thrushes, and starlings were forever busy on the lawn, not a rook appeared, unless perhaps a solitary one stalking about in the long grass below a certain tree, and possibly one of the roving bachelor gang, with an eye towards walnuts. Beyond a doubt it was that band of miscreants who last year, after a long drought, set to work on a neighboring stack of fine wheat, tore open a broad chasm in the thatch, and in a few hours carried off half that store of grain before they were detected. But it would be unfair to regard this as other than an exceptional case, or to condemn the whole race as "ex rapto vivere nati," simply because the police had been once called in. Even that well-known robber the carrion crow has hardly had justice done to him in this matter, having often been hanged, drawn, and quartered as "a

foe" to the wheat crop on the scantiest evidence.

The United States Department of Agriculture, in a recent report, brings forward in his favor evidence of the clearest and most convincing kind. The stomachs of a thousand crows were carefully examined, with the simple result that more insects and spiders were found than any other kind of food in all the months but January and February. During May and June five hundred and thirty were as carefully analyzed, and a full half of all the contents was proved to consist entirely of insects, the majority being among the farmer's worst foes—locusts, May beetles, weevils, wire-worms, and the grubs of the cockchafer (*Melolontha*) and Harry Long-legs (*Tipula*), which the rook does his best to exterminate. Add to this a goodly number of field mice and voles, and towards winter a few stray grains of waste wheat from the stubble or the farmyard,² and the list is complete.

If this much be admitted on behalf of the crow, far more justly may it be urged in defence of the rook, a large portion of whose time is spent on the wing, or at hard work in the ploughed field or meadow, busily destroying the very enemies which defy man's utmost skill to reach. Taken as a whole, therefore, the character of *Corvus* is worthy of much respect. Slow and deliberate in the choice of a home or a friend, he never hurries and seldom makes mistakes; if now and then a bit of a thief, he wages continual war against many pests that we are well rid of. He may be slightly pompous and apt to give himself airs in private life; he may even fancy at times, "in the gaiety of his heart, that he is sing-

¹ Mr. Hawker, of Morwenstow, delightfully tells us that, under similar circumstances, he made it a part of his daily prayers for three years that some neighboring rooks would migrate to his domain, "and at last his prayer was heard."

² Eight wood pigeons, said to be feeding on a field of clover, were shot by Mr. St. John, and on being examined the crops were found to be full of the seeds of two of the worst weeds of the country, wild mustard and ragweed. No amount of human labor and search would have collected on the same ground, at that time, as much of these seeds as was collected daily by each one of the great flock of five or six hundred pigeons for weeks together. Much the same may be said for the rook.—St. John's "Highland Sports," p. 118.

ing," when he is but giving a croak; but he is a pleasant and cheerful neighbor, and often shows a liking for his surroundings, in spite of that terrible "slaughter of the innocents" from which he once barely escaped with his life. Of that day itself let Mr. Sowerby give us a sketch in his own picturesque words.

Wandering across the park [he says] by the stream, full of speckled trout, that on a sunny morning lends a willing mirror to the wandering clouds, I feel sad that so bright a morn should usher in so cruel and bloody a day. As I enter my door I feel like the sheriff who on certain special mornings hates the work that is to follow when required to attend particular functions in an official capacity. But the law having been broken by some vagabond rooks guilty of many delinquencies, my heart was hardened, and I had to summon a band of executioners from among the neighboring farmers.

Among these was Willson, a small farmer, hardly looking like a man ready for dealing out death on all sides, making parents childless, and nearly as often children parentless; for, the fit of murder being on him, his power of distinguishing between young and old is blinded. He is armed with what he calls "a twice-barrelled gun"—a weapon of terrible proclivities, but which having once made up its mind to speak seals the fate of its victims with impartial judgment and a voice of thunder. Next comes the schoolmaster, carrying his weapon as if an unbearable anxiety and terror to himself, but equally intent on murder.

I believe [says Mr. Sowerby] that if his wife (who is home secretary as well as minister for war) were to see him thus armed for the fray, she would scarcely recognize him as the mild and learned teacher of youthful villagers.

So much for the humorous side of things. A moment later the deadly fray has begun; the din becomes incessant, made up of explosions in many keys, and followed by ominous heavy thuds as some beloved son or daughter, maimed or dead, comes headlong down to the earth during the fusillade.

But above all the din can still be heard the sad cries of the distracted parents, high up above the shambles, while the merriment below waxes louder and louder at each successful or idle shot. And so this miserable business, devoid of anything worthy of the name of sport, drags on and on "until," says our host—"the shoulders of my guests are "blackened, and they themselves, weary of slaughter, wander back to a goodly repast in the servants' hall." There we must leave them, only glancing for a moment at the touching picture he presently draws of the battlefield while strolling over it when the fight was done.

Most of the dead had been removed, but here and there among the bushes, "where the keen eye of the rook-ple man had not penetrated," dead and dying were still to be found. Some, lying on their backs, with half-shut eyes, and claws stretched out, as if supplicating for help; others, after sudden and swift death, resting on one side, slumbering peacefully, with beaks buried in the long grass; and sadder still, not a few stricken birds crawling away from the shambles as they best can, in search of a refuge, though life hangs only by a slender thread.

"As dusk comes on," adds the kindly master of the domain, "I grow weary of hearing the cries of the parent birds, ceaselessly asking their more fortunate neighbors for tidings of the lost ones;" and he wanders homewards at last, trying to shut out the recollection of the day, "and vowing never to countenance the like again."

Many stories are told of the sagacity of the rook, and of his tenacious memory, and in the final page of his book Mr. Sowerby gives us a striking instance—drawn from life—which deserves to be recorded. A week or two after the slaughter, when most of the birds had forsaken their old "habitat," he and a friend observed on a bare, solitary tree two rooks, one of which was making a most peculiar noise—"a low chatter accompanied by the snapping of its beak"—and hopping from branch to branch in a most excited state, while her mate sat motionless.

Wondering what it all meant, they were presently overtaken by the two birds, swooping down within a few feet of them, and uttering loud cries of anger, the pursuit being continued almost up to the house. The next day, being out alone, the two birds on the same tree took no notice of him, but, on being joined by his friend, they attacked and pursued them with loud cries as before. Unable to understand this strange outbreak, the squire, alone, paid them a second visit, wearing—by accident—his friend's great-coat, when, "to my amazement," he says,

no sooner had I turned the corner of the house than down came the furious bird, following me with loud cries wherever I went, and on my stopping under an apple-tree settled on it overhead, not ten feet away, tearing leaves from the branches, and jabbering all the time in a most distracted fashion.

That special great-coat was the cause of all the disturbance. His friend had worn it a day or two before, and gone out with a rifle to shoot a young rook on a neighboring tree. Hence the frantic grief and fury of one of the distracted parents, which followed the murderer to the very last, "pursuing the glg in which he drove away even up to the railway station." With this final incident Mr. Sowerby closes his lively and instructive sketch of "Rooks and their Neighbors," which, adorned as it is with admirable woodcuts from the author's own drawings, all lovers of birds will read with pleasure and close with regret. Of the life and career of "Corney," the real hero of the play, who travelled from Winchester to the manor house in a schoolboy's hamper—and survived the journey—we have said little. He lived to become the pet of the household, the terror of all cats, the friend and comrade, or the bitter enemy, of "Boots," the fox terrier; the cunning plunderer of larder and kitchen, and the destroyer of every stray book that fell in his way; all of which and a score of other delightful traits must be left for our readers' own pleasant discovery. As a

civilized and educated rook it may be said that he rather came to grief and an untimely end, being much given to strong language, as well as to a great love of bathing, which, though "cleanliness be next to godliness," is not quite the same thing. "He, like most of us," says his biographer, "had in his character certain knots and ravel that were not so pleasantly smoothed out as ours are, and did not escape passing under the rough file of a candid world's opinion." His final exit from the scene was sudden and mysterious, but his whole career from first to last was full of interest, and a more picturesque and graphic sketch of bird life than that given in his biography it would be hard to find.

From Macmillan's Magazine.
NOT MADE IN GERMANY.

My legal researches sometimes compel me to consult the German jurists in the library of the British Museum, and rather than face the terrors of the original it is my custom to employ a translator. Now women are not much good at the dead languages, but I find they can tackle almost any tongue you can talk in. My translator was always a woman, and the same woman—Miss Barker.

Miss Barker was a marvel of her kind; she possessed, I think, every virtue of which it is capable. She was fifty, which is my own age. She was plain; hard and grey as granite,—a massive ugliness that soothed and reassured you; it seemed to vouch for the solidity of her understanding. Miss Barker was punctuality incarnate. No amount of rain hindered her; one imagined her, not as relying on an umbrella or a mackintosh like an ordinary woman, but as herself impervious to weather. She took no count of seasons nor yet of hours. And Miss Barker had positively no fear. No matter what appalling works you offered her, she attacked them all, in front or in the rear with the

same passionless intrepidity. Her discretion was a thing to swear by; she could be trusted alone with any author. No dallying with him,—no flirtation, so to speak,—for her; she simply picked up his meaning by the tail-end, and followed it through a score of convoluted clauses. He never led her astray by a delusive syntax,—not he; she had an eye for the most ingeniously concealed parentheses. And that woman's voice! It can only be described by paradoxes. Gutturally clear, flexibly monotonous, trained by decades of reading-room discipline, it was inaudible to any student but myself. In short its owner was not a person but a faculty.

For one happy year Miss Barker (that is to say, her faculty,) was mine. Then I lost her. It was in November. I was about to collect materials for an article to appear in the December number of the *Jurist*. The translation would be a week's work, as Miss Barker counted work. I sent for her in a violent hurry. She had never failed me yet; conceive then my horror when, instead of receiving her usual answer by the evening post, I had to wait two days for any sign. Her letter then solemnly informed me that she was "called away to nurse an aged relative in the North, and would be detained indefinitely.

Well, it was right that Miss Barker should nurse her relative in the North; it was right that that relative should be aged, Miss Barker herself suggesting a discreet antiquity in all her surroundings; but it was hard on me. Miss Barker, however, had left hope in her postscript. She gave me the address of a friend of hers, Miss Dancy. To get into a hansom, to fly to Miss Dancy, to carry her off to the Museum, and thrust my author into her hands, seemed the work of a moment.

Miss Dancy was a florid young person with a self-confident manner. Half-way through the first sentence she turned pale and began to splutter German idiotically. I stared. She stopped and laid the book down with a despairing groan. I handed it back to her politely. Then Miss Dancy said that I had deceived her; I was unreasonable,

I should have engaged a legal expert for this job; and when I mildly protested, she burst into tears. By this time chivalry was extinct; but I had enough self-command to call another hansom, pack Miss Dancy into it, and send her home again.

In the afternoon I was at my accustomed seat in the reading-room, creeping alone and at a snail's pace through the mazes of my author, when I was summoned to the centre by a message from the librarian in charge. He had known Miss Barker's worth; he had been a dismayed spectator of the morning's tragedy; perhaps he had plied me. At any rate he whispered hurriedly in my ear that, if I wanted a translator, a lady had just applied at the Museum for work of the kind, that he had been assured of her competence by an authority on whom he could rely, and that I should probably find her at this moment in the outer hall. He gave me her card with an address on it: Miss Nora Vyvart, 17 Montague Street. I could have embraced him on the spot.

There was no lady in the outer hall, only a young girl coming from the principal librarian's quarters. She walked towards me with an absent air, and when I advanced she stopped and became absorbed in the bust of Caligula. My first glance had told me that she was young; now I saw that she was well-dressed and pretty. My heart sank; this could not be the lady I was looking for. To tell the truth, I did not much want it to be, my limited experience having taught me to regard a woman's plainness as a sign of her intellectual integrity. Hoping that some other petticoat would soon sail in sight, I retreated, holding out the card as a flag of distress. But she had seen my signal. She came forward timidly, and we exchanged glances; her eyes had an expression of appeal that was borne out by her manner and wrought reluctant conviction in me. I raised my hat.

"Are you Miss Vyvart?" I asked in apologetic tones, brandishing my card.

"Yes. Were you looking for me?" she answered with naive alacrity.

"Ah,—yes. That is, the librarian tells me you are anxious to—er—undertake some translation. German, I believe?"

"Yes; that's just what I want. I really *can* do it, you know."

"So the librarian assures me," said I, feeling by no means assured. Quite apart from her deplorable prettiness, my young lady was a little too eager to forestall criticism. "But—do you think you could begin at once?"

Her eyes lit up with pleasure; they were blue, with great black lashes.

"Now—this minute, do you mean?"

"Yes, please."

I took her to the reading-room. As we went in, her eyes swept the great circle with evident interest, and she seemed to be sniffing the atmosphere appreciatively. No doubt she was impressed by that, and the silence, and the dizzy galleries of books; it was a good sign. I led the way to our seats at the far end of the room. "We shall be less disturbed here," I explained, meaning that we should be less disturbing; but her face fell, and she looked about her uneasily. It struck me that I had been a little precipitate in my methods with poor Miss Dancy; this time I was determined not to err on the side of rashness. So I waited patiently while she made her little preparations. First she took off her long gloves as if she were skinning herself; next came a sort of fur animal she had round her neck, then her hat and veil. Under much superfluous hair of no particular color, I saw that she had a good forehead; not so big as Miss Barker's noble brow, but still, better than Miss Dancy's by a long way. When she had found a place for her things among my papers, I approached her cautiously.

"This," I said, in a reading-room whisper, "is the book. We must get through this article to-day."

She put her head on one side and looked at it critically. "Very well," (taking my note-book and choosing a pen), "but I would like a dictionary.—in case of accidents." She spoke in a bright conversational tone that raised all the heads from the desks near us.

"Yes,—but the translation must be *viva voce*, or rather, *sotto voce*, please."

She stood on tip-toe and peeped round the other side of our row of desks, laughing below her breath.

"Now," I said gently recovering my note-book, "you read while I write."

She began in a sweet penetrating voice that made me shudder. An old gentleman five desks off remonstrated, and I caught the librarian's eye looking sternly in our direction. She smiled, and dropped her voice to a whisper. For the next half hour, if any one moved in our neighborhood she looked nervously up as if expecting a rebuke. It never came; I don't know how she managed it, but she seemed to express unutterable apology by a little contraction of her eyebrows. I was not hopeful; it was clear that I had not found another Miss Barker. However, her headlong facility was an agreeable surprise after an interlude of Miss Dancy. I thought she blundered now and then, but her frank way of correcting herself gave me a sense of security. We had got through a third of the article when the closing-bell rang. She put down her book and looked at me with the same pathos as before, except that now there was considerable fear in her appeal.

"It was shockingly done—wasn't it?—I'm afraid you won't want me again."

"No, no, it wasn't half bad for a beginning. I dare say you're not used to German law."

"N—no—I couldn't understand it if it was in English. May I come again to-morrow, then?"

"Yes; by all means. You'll do better when you've got into the swing of it." We arranged a meeting for ten o'clock and the look of joy came back to her eyes. It was all a little sad, I thought. Apparently this work meant a great deal to her, and she was so young for it. Who could she be? The dusky tinge on her forehead, her sun-browned cheeks, and the freckles on her small irregular nose suggested that she was not the typical Londoner. Not that I notice these things, only she had forced them on my attention somehow. And her work? Well—she had translated six

pages of German in three hours, which was more than I could do.

"You are fortunate in living so close to the Museum," I said at our formal leave-taking.

"I am indeed, very." A curious expression flitted across her face and her mouth twitched. Did Miss Vyvart practise irony? Poor little girl, driven by some disaster from her country home, to earn her bread—in Bloomsbury!

The next morning I found her at her post, punctual as Miss Barker herself, and in high glee. "I came early on purpose to get good places" (she might have been talking of a theatre), "and I've found such nice ones."

I could not cordially commend her choice. She had taken seat I.7 opposite the door, the most public position in the room. I detested it on this account above all others; but when I proposed removing to some more secluded quarter she was miserable, "Oh, *please*, let's stay here, if you don't mind. It's so—so stifling everywhere else, and I made everybody so cross down there yesterday. I think I should do better in a fresh place." I thought she had given me rather too many reasons, but the last was plausible, and she had her way.

Every morning, then, at ten o'clock Miss Vyvart was to be found at I.7, behind the glass screen, gloves, hat, and furs on the desk before her. The reading went on much the same as on the first day, except that, as I feared, her attention was sadly distracted by the frequent coming and going. But she seemed to have fitted into her place, and I dreaded the unsettling effects of a removal. Indeed she stoutly resisted every suggestion of the kind, and when a lady expresses a strong preference what are you to do? Unfortunately, though she had learned to modulate her voice a little, we caused as much annoyance to our neighbors here as we had done in the other place. Some fled at our approach; we had swept our own row clear the first day, and thinned an area of several yards around us. Of

those who still held out, the occupant of the desk on the other side of ours was always raising his head over the top of it in an expostulatory manner. I was sorry for him. He was one of the familiar figures of the place; the reading-room was his study as it was mine, and, like myself, he had an affection for his own seat. It was clear that he would soon be driven out of it. But as Miss Vyvart argued (plausibly again), it was better we should keep to one place, because it could then be known and avoided by the irritable people, and the rest must have got used to us by this time. She always said *us*, as if I were partly responsible for the nuisance. As for the nervous gentleman opposite, she had no pity for him, and when he had to get up and point to the placard enjoining *silence* it only made her laugh. Miss Vyvart was incorrigible.

Whether she had any pity for another sufferer I cannot tell. We worked six hours a day on an average, and at the end of the week we had worried through exactly one-fifth of the material I required. It was maddening; five weeks more to finish it at this rate; there was small chance of my article being ready by December. I felt myself getting as unhinged and irritable as the poor young gentleman opposite. My hand was out, and some of my notes were nonsense. I had never known this happen before. However jaded I was, I could always work with Miss Barker, holding my head under the cold stream of her deliberate fluency, while my pen ran on of its own accord. With all her massiveness she effaced her personality, keeping herself at a judicious distance from my ear while she imparted some fifty pages of abstruse matter in a burst of confidence. But Miss Vyvart's prettiness was impertinently conspicuous; it got between me and my subject and put me out.

My subject—Ah! It was the natural history of law, the science of its evolution. A dry study? No! For me law was no rigid skeleton; it was a living plastic thing, infinitely adaptable, sensitive to all the influences of time. It had the spirit and the voice of humanity,

and it called to me across the centuries. I had found the soul of it with all its sublime reservations and concessions. For me law was the imperial and feminine thing that blesses and sways. For me she lived; for me she unveiled her beauty; her type is a little severe perhaps, but it had pleased my fancy till now. Thirty years ago I had been her servant; she made me her lover; and she has never changed to me and my grey hairs; neither has she taken exception to my wig. She is not a frivolous divinity. Now Miss Barker respected this infatuation of mine; she understood the temper of the specialist. I never detected a gleam of enthusiasm or interest in her eye; she had the tact to leave all that to me, and I revelled in the voluptuous monopoly of passion. But fools rush in,—and Miss Vyvart thought nothing of intruding on that sacred intimacy. First she took an intelligent interest. Oh, that intelligent interest—how well I knew it! I had seen it hundreds of times, smirking in the drawing-rooms of the inane. But I must say that Miss Vyvart's was different; it had the wild flavor of the provinces. I hated it all the same. When she saw that she changed her tactics. She ceased to reverence my austere Lady. She pretended to find amusement (that last affectation of the incompetent) in terms she could neither understand nor pronounce. *Vis major* and *Diligentia diligentissima boni patrisfamilie* particularly appealed to her sense of humor. By the way, a woman's sense of humor is a most mysterious thing.

This was in our second week. In our third I was still more surprised by her eccentric behavior. We had been getting on rather nicely. The nervous gentleman had disappeared; whatever he may have been we were no longer disturbed by his head bobbing up and down like a Jack-in-the-box. Well,—I had thought Miss Vyvart slow, but sure; now even I detected her in various inaccuracies. I had relied on her staying-power; now she was showing signs of flagging; she was torpid and depressed. At last she made one blunder

so appalling that I stopped and stared.

"I don't quite like that rendering," said she with dispassionate criticism.

"No; no more do I, if you'll forgive my saying so."

This time she was frightened; she clasped her hands imploringly. "Yes, it *was* dreadful; but I didn't mean it. I can do better than that, can't I? Do let me try again."

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

"Oh, very well, if you don't want me."

She turned away, very red in the face, and I saw her hands trembling as she put on her veil. I could have got rid of her now easily, but I was weak enough to be sorry for her. "I do want you; I can't get any one else."

"You're very complimentary; but you needn't mind telling me not to come again, it won't hurt my feelings. And I—I'm not dependent on this work I'm doing so badly, so don't let *that* influence you."

The monkey! She had guessed my thoughts then? "You are mistaken. I only want you to go home and rest till the end of the week, and come again on Monday."

She looked at me long and earnestly, as I may say no young woman looked at me before. "Do you really mean it?"

"Of course I do."

"Then I'll go now and come again on Monday."

That little dialogue broke no rules, for it was unheard by any one but ourselves. I went on with my work and thought no more of it; but alone in my chambers in Great Russell Street the image of Nora Vyvart followed me with unmaidenly persistence. I bothered myself with questions. Why so many moods yesterday? Why so much emotion to-day? Miss Vyvart had assured me that it was not the work she cared about, and I was inclined to believe it; her brand-new clothes and extraordinary headdress were not quite consistent with genteel poverty in Bloomsbury. Yet I had been keeping her on in spite of her obvious incompetence, pity for her supposed condition dis-

arming my just anger; and all the time she was not dependent on the work. Was it possible—A ghastly suspicion crossed my mind. I got up and looked at myself in the glass. H'm! Fifty, but might have been forty-five; hair grey, but plenty of it; crow's feet not startlingly visible,—well, to the naked eye. I sat down and began a little note to her, telling her not to come on Monday, as I had an engagement. But—what engagement? And in any case, was I not breaking faith with the confiding creature? All this suspicion because a girl had on a new dress, and that a pretty one? I came to the conclusion that I was a fool, and, what's more, an old fool.

Night brings counsel, so does a good dinner, and I sat down to mine. After coffee I became a prey to doubts of another kind. There had been blunders in that translation, and the question was, how many, and of what kind? I spent the rest of that week comparing my notes with the original. To my despair I found that Miss Vyvart's errors were not trifling like herself, but thorough and fundamental. She had blundered comprehensively and on a system. There was nothing for it but for me to labor through the whole of the text with the help of a dictionary, and on Monday morning to tell her she was no use and send her about her business. Both courses were difficult.

On Monday Miss Vyvart was there with all her paraphernalia. There too was Jack-in-the-box, as irritable as ever. He would have peace soon, poor fellow. But when it came to the point I was afflicted with a sudden vision of the pretty new clothes getting old and shabby, and a pretty Miss Vyvart going about in them seeking for employment and finding none. She should have another trial. Four days' rest had done wonders for her. Her face was fresh and lively; perhaps her brain would be fresh and lively too. But I was going to keep my eye on her this time. I ordered her to translate literally, word for word; that made it easier for me to follow her and detect errors; but I made her believe it was because I admired the

structure of the German sentence, as more logical than our own. She obeyed, translating with comic effect, to her own vast amusement and the frenzy of our neighbor. He bobbed up and down more than ever to-day. At last I could stand it no longer. I gathered up my papers,—with that accursed fur animal sprawling all over them; it had a bunch of violets in its mouth too. "We must change our seats. We're annoying that gentleman."

"Oh, no, I'm sure we're not. He doesn't mind. I think—he—rather likes it."

"I should not like it if I were he."

Her shoulders shook with silent laughter. "Oh, but you're not, I'm thankful to say. No—" (and she spread out her hands over the books) "I'm *not* going. We've been so happy and comfortable here."

"But I insist."

"Well, then, I can't translate another word. Moving about shakes all the words in the dictionary up together, and I can't tell which is which."

I sighed heavily and sat down. After that she translated with a disdainful flippancy which implied that in her opinion German law was a ridiculous dilettante study. The results, as I anticipated, were disastrous. "But *Wirthschaft* does mean political economy," she wailed. "It's in the dictionary; I looked it out."

"Don't you know that it's a translator's business to make an intelligent choice among the words in a dictionary?"

"Yes; but you see,—I haven't any principle of selection."

"So it seems. The sooner you cultivate one the better." I spoke severely. She closed the book and folded her hands. "Well, what are you waiting for now?"

"Till you're in a good temper. Do you know, you're paralyzing me with fright?"

I smiled; but I determined to send her away to-morrow. She had anticipated me, however. At twelve o'clock she looked up shyly: "I—I'm afraid I can't

come this afternoon. In fact I can't come again at all."

"Er—indeed—and why not?"

"Because,—I can't give you any reason, except that I *must* leave town this afternoon."

"Are you serious?"

"Perfectly." But somehow she did not look it.

"Well,—I think you might have told me this before."

"How could I, when I didn't know?"

"Oh, you didn't know. But we can't argue here; suppose we go outside and discuss it properly."

"Very well." It was a mild day, and we sat down on one of the seats in the portico. "It feels like sitting out after a dance, doesn't it?" said she.

I assented coldly; indeed, she had led me a fine dance through the pages of that dictionary.

"I wish they'd bring us some ices," she sighed.

That roused me. "All this is a little sudden, isn't it? And very awkward for me. How am I to get my article finished without a translator?"

"Isn't it finished?"

"No, it isn't. It's a week late, and it's not begun yet."

"That's my fault; I'm so sorry."

"Whosever fault it is, it's no good being sorry. It can't be helped now."

"You are too good to me."

"Ah—let me see"—I had no precise idea of what I was going to say next—"You are leaving town to-day you said?"

"Yes."

"Well then, perhaps we'd better settle." I took out my purse. But she laid her hand on my arm, and her eyes flashed under her knitted brows. "No—no—not that! I can't take it."

"Why not?"

"It would be an indictable offence,—obtaining money under false pretences—"

"Pardon me—"

"I won't. Listen. I've not done what you wanted, and I've wasted your time—"

"That is not the point."

"But it *is* the point. I'm not badly off;

I'm not working for money; I'm working for,—for practice."

A sharp little practitioner indeed! "Excuse me, I can't take your view of it. You must really allow me—"

She pushed back my hand. "No! I couldn't, Mr. Doe." Her eyes filled with tears. "I ought to have given up that work when I found I couldn't do it. I've behaved atrociously; but I couldn't help it." She smiled. "It was a case of,—of *vis major*, you know."

"Indeed? I wish you would explain."

"I wish I could."

We looked at each other. The terrible doubt that had haunted me last week had become a certainty. That self-possession which has always distinguished me was beginning to go. At the same instant the swing door opened, and a man came out; it was Jack-in-the-box again. He started when he saw us (no wonder), and raised his hat politely. He would have passed on, but that she—that extraordinary creature—darted forward. She was going to apologize to him too, I suppose, for annoying him. To my amazement she caught him familiarly by the arm and led him up to me. Had she taken leave of her senses? "Mr. Doe, I want to introduce you to my friend, Mr. Graham." We bowed. She smiled up at him impertinently. "Frank, may I explain?" The young man was evidently amused at her, but he looked a little embarrassed, I thought. She took him aside, and they wandered in and out among the pillars of the portico. Then I heard her voice saying: "It's a shame: I ought to tell him everything,—poor old thing; and then they came back to me, she radiant. "Now you can go, Frank. Wait for me outside, please." He obeyed, and she sat down beside me again. We watched him going down the pavement, the figure I knew so well, with the brown face and curly hair, a boy's head on a student's shoulders.

"Now," said she, "I'm going to tell you an amusing story. It's all right, for Mr. Graham and I are engaged. We have been for years, only my father, Major Vyvart, wouldn't hear of it, because,—because I have a great deal

more money than I know what to do with, and Frank hasn't any, except what he earns. When father found it out he swore (he swears shockingly) that if I married him he'd cut me off with a sixpence. So I just ran up to town to show that I didn't care, and that I could work as well as any poor man's wife. The difficulty was to find the work. I tried everywhere; but I wanted to get something in the British Museum, because Frank works there, you know. And what do you think I did? I went straight up to the man in the middle of the room, and asked for it. Could you believe it?"

I could; it was like her impudence.

"Well,—he was awfully nice to me; and do you know, I actually made him laugh,—out loud too."

"I am not at all surprised at that."

"Then, don't you remember?—he sent you to me. I never shall forget you coming along with that card in your hand. And—well, you were kind to me too; I don't know what we should have done without you. The only thing was, I thought every minute you'd make me get up and move my seat away from Frank. He would go popping his head over to see how I was getting on. You did frighten me one day."

"Did I? You richly deserved it."

"Yes; I was dishonest, I know. All the same I'd have gone away if you'd told me to, but—you didn't. And I did so want to show father what I was made of. He won't try it on again with me." She nodded her head emphatically. "He's given in. We're going home to-day, both of us, for his blessing. Fancy, he even apologized; he said it was all his fatherly affection,—fatherly fussiness; and he never knew where I was all the time, either. I thought I was caught once, when some one asked me if I wasn't Major Vyvart's daughter. You see it was a case of *vis major* and of the *diligentia diligentissima* of a good stupid old *paterfamilias*."

I had to pretend I saw the point of that joke. Then we said good-bye, and she took off her bunch of violets and gave it to me.

Half-way down the pavement, she

turned back, though Frank was waiting for her at the gates. "By the bye, who's the editor of that magazine you're writing for?"

I told her, smiling drearily.

"I thought so."

"It's no matter what you thought; he won't look at my article now."

If I had been a generous man I would have spared her that reproach, but she was in no mood to mind it. She called out cheerily: "Oh, yes he will! Frank knows him. We'll make it all right!" She ran to him, and they passed along the great brown railings out of my sight.

Of course, it was all right. The world, and therefore the British Museum, is built for boys and girls to make love in. And they are taught to think they can move heaven and earth. However, these young people did more; they moved the editor of the *Jurist*; at any rate he took my article.

It was all right and proper, no doubt; and yet,—was it for this that I had lost Miss Barker? I might have had her services all the time too if I had known; that was the irony of it. She had returned to town not long after she left it, had enquired for me, and, understanding that I had filled her place, had forsaken me for another, accepting a permanent secretaryship at the very time when— Ah, well! I have engaged the services of a polyglot Russian gentleman with a velvet voice and an iron constitution.

There is peace once more in the reading-room of the British Museum, and in the mind of Richard Doe, Q.C.

From The Fortnightly Review.
THE NEW REALISM.

In a day when the spurious is everywhere supposed to be successfully disguised and sufficiently recommended to the public by merely being described as new, it need not surprise us to find our attention solicited by a New Realism, of which the two most obvious things to be said are that it is unreal

with the falsity of the half truth, and as old as the habit of exaggeration. One of the latest professors of this doubtful form of art, is the very young American writer, Mr. Stephen Crane, who first attracted notice in this country by a novel entitled "The Red Badge of Courage." Whether that work was or was not described by its admirers as an achievement in realism, I am not aware. As a matter of fact, and as the antecedents, and indeed the age, of the writer showed, it was not a record of actual observation. Mr. Crane had evidently been an industrious investigator and collator of the emotional experiences of soldiers, and had evolved from them a picture of the mental state of a recruit going into action. It was artistically done and obtained a not undeserved success; but no method, of course, could be less realistic, in the sense on which the professors of the New Realism insist, than the process which resulted in this elaborate study of the emotions of the battlefield from the pen of a young man who has never himself smelt powder.

Since then, however, Mr. Crane has given us two small volumes, which are presumably realistic or nothing. If circumstances have prevented the author from writing about soldiers in action "with his eye on the object," there are no such obstacles to his studying the Bowery and "Bowery Boys" from the life; we may take it, therefore, that "Maggie" and "George's Mother" are the products of such study. According to Mr. Howell's effusive "Appreciation," which prefaces it, "Maggie" is a remarkable story having "that quality of fatal necessity which dominates Greek tragedy." Let us see then what this Sophoclean work is like.

The story of "Maggie" opens with a fight between the boys of Rum Alley and those of Devil's Row. Jimmie, the heroine's brother, is a boy of Rum Alley, aged nine, and when the curtain draws up he is the centre of a circle of urchins who are pelting him with stones. "Howls of wrath went up from them. On their small convulsed faces shone the grins of true assassins.

As they charged they threw stones and cursed in shrill chorus. . . . Jimmie's coat had been torn to shreds in a scuffle, and his hat was gone. He had bruises on twenty parts of his body, and blood was dripping from a cut in his head. His wan features looked like those of a tiny insane demon. . . . The little boys ran to and fro hurling stones and swearing in barbaric trebles. . . . A stone had smashed in Jimmie's mouth. Blood was bubbling over his chin and down upon his ragged shirt. Tears made furrows on his dirt-stained cheeks. His thin legs had begun to tremble and turn weak, causing his small body to reel. His roaring curses of the first part of the fight had changed to a blasphemous chatter. In the yells of the whirling mob of Devil's Row children there were notes of joy like songs of triumphant savagery. The little boys seemed to leer gloatingly at the blood on the other child's face."

A lad of sixteen, afterwards destined to play an important part in the story, then approaches. He smites one of the Devil's Row children on the back of the head, and the little boy falls to the ground and gives a tremendous howl. A reinforcement of the Rum Alley children then arrives, and there is a momentary pause in the fight, during which Jimmie becomes involved in a quarrel with Blue Billie, one of his own side.

They struck at each other, clinched, and rolled over on the cobblestones.

"Smash 'im, Jimmie, kick d' face off 'im," yelled Pete, in tones of delight.

The small combatants pounded and kicked, scratched and tore. They began to weep, and their curses struggled in their throats with sobs. The other little boys clasped their hands and wriggled their legs in excitement. They formed a bobbing circle round the pair.

At this juncture Jimmie's father arrives on the scene and endeavors to separate the combatants with a view of "belting" his son. To this end he begins to kick into the chaotic mass on the ground. "The boy Billie felt a heavy boot strike his head. He made

a furious effort and disentangled himself from Jimmie. He tottered away. Jimmie arose painfully from the ground and confronting his father began to curse him." His parent kicked him. "Come home now," he cried, "an' stop yer jawin' or I'll lam the everlasting head off yer." Upon this they go home, the boy swearing "luridly," for he "felt that it was a degradation for one who aimed to be some vague kind of a soldier or a man of blood, with a sort of sublime license, to be taken home by a father."

That is the first chapter much condensed. In the original there are eight pages of it. Is it art? If so, is the making of mud-pies an artistic occupation, and are the neglected brats who are to be found rolling in the gutters of every great city unconscious artists?

In the next chapter Jimmie pummels his little sister, and his mother quarrels with and rates her husband till she drives him to the public-house, remaining at home to get drunk herself. In the third chapter, Jimmie, who has stopped out to avoid an outbreak of her intoxicated fury, steals home again late at night, listens outside the door to a fight going on within between his father and mother, and at last creeps in with his little sister to find both parents prostrate on the floor in a drunken stupor and to huddle in a corner until daybreak, cowering with terror lest they should awaken. For when you are a "realist's" little boy, you have to be very handy and adaptable and do exactly what that realist requires of you: so that, though you may have been defying and cursing your father at one moment, like the daring little imp you have been described as being, you may at the next moment, and for the purpose of another sort of painful picture, have to behave like a cowed and broken-spirited child of a totally different type.

These opening scenes take up about one-fifth of the short book, and those that follow are like unto them. There is a little less fighting, but a good deal more drinking. Jimmie becomes a truck driver, and fights constantly with

other drivers, but the fights are not described at length. His father dies, probably of drink, and his mother takes to drinking harder than ever. Maggie is seduced and deserted by Pete, the youth who appeared on the scene during the opening fight and hits one of the infant fighters on the back of the head. Jimmie resents the proceedings of the Bowery Lovelace as a breach of good manners, and, going with a friend to the tavern where Pete acts as "bar-tender," the two set upon him and there ensues a fight, in the course of which the lips of the combatants "curl back and stretch tightly over the gums in ghoul-like grins." It lasts for four pages, and is brought to a close by the intervention of the police, and the escape of Jimmie "with his face drenched in blood." How this story continues, how Maggie falls lower and lower and finally dies, and how after her death her gin-sodden mother is passionately entreated to forgive her, and at last graciously consents to do so—all this may be read in Mr. Crane's pages, and shall not here be summarized from them. Is it necessary to do so? Or to give a précis of the companion volume, "George's Mother," the story of a "little old woman" actually of sober and industrious habits, and of her actually not vicious though weak son, of whose backslidings she dies? Need I give specimen extracts from it? I hope not—I think not. The extracts which have been already given are perfectly fair samples of Mr. Crane's work. Any one who likes to take it from the writer of this article, that to read these two little books through would be to wade through some three hundred and thirty pages of substantially the same stuff as the above extracts, will do Mr. Crane no injustice. So I will pass from him to a Realist of considerably larger calibre.

For Mr. Arthur Morrison, author of "Tales of Mean Streets" and "A Child of the Jago," undoubtedly carries heavier guns than Mr. Crane. To begin with, he can tell a story, while Mr. Crane can only string together a series

of loosely cohering incidents. Many of his characters are vividly and vigorously drawn, while the American writer puts us off for the most part with sketches and shadowy outlines. Mr. Morrison's ruffians and their ruffianism are better discriminated, and though there is plenty of fighting and drinking and general brutality in his last and strongest work—one of the faction fights in which, indeed, is related at quite inordinate length—he understands that the description of these things alone will not suffice to make a satisfactory story even about blackguards, and he has outgrown that touching naïveté displayed in the younger realist's obvious belief in the perpetual freshness and charm of mere squalor. He perceives that merely to follow his characters, as Mr. Crane does his, from the drinking-bar to the low music-hall and thence home again, day after day, with interludes of brawling and "bashing" and other like recreations, becomes, after a hundred pages or so, a little monotonous, and that the life of the criminal in his constant struggle with the law, and in perpetual danger from its officers, possesses at least the element of "sport," and presents features of variety and interest which that of the mere sot and tavern-brawler cannot possibly offer. Above all, Mr. Morrison wields a certain command of pathos, a power in which Mr. Crane is not only deficient, but of which he does not even appear to know the meaning; and were it not for a certain strange and, in truth, paradoxical defect, of which more hereafter, in his method of employing it, he would at times be capable of moving his readers very powerfully indeed. In a word, the English writer differs from the American by all the difference which divides the trained craftsman from the crude amateur, and deserves to that extent more serious and detailed criticism.

What, however, has most astonished one of Mr. Morrison's critics fresh from a perusal of "A Child of the Jago," is the impression of extraordinary unreality which, taken as a

whole, it leaves behind it. To a critic opposed to the theories and methods of so-called realism, this is naturally rather disconcerting. He has probably been girding up his critical loins for the task of showing that the realist has lost sight of art in the perusal and capture of naked Truth, when lo! he finds that even Truth herself appears to have altogether escaped her pursuer. He was preparing himself to detect and expose the æsthetic and artistic defects of a supposed product of literary photography, when to his amazement he discovers that the photograph, though it seems distinct enough to the gaze which concentrates itself successively on the various parts of the picture, yet fades when the attempt is made to view it in its entirety into a mere blur. He comes out from the Jago with the feelings, not, as he had expected, of a man who has just paid a visit to the actual district under the protection of the police, but of one who has just awakened from the dream of a prolonged sojourn in some fairyland of horror. This, to be sure, may be the effect which Mr. Morrison desired to produce; it is certainly not difficult, I think, to show that his methods are distinctly calculated to produce it; but then those methods cannot be exactly the methods which the realist professes to employ, nor that effect the effect at which he is commonly supposed to aim.

What is the Jago? The Jago is a name of Mr. Morrison's own invention, and applied by him to a district which he carefully localizes by giving it two real East End thoroughfares, High Street, Shoreditch, and Bethnal Green Road, as boundaries on two of its sides. He estimates its area as that of "a square of two hundred and fifty yards or less," and describes its population as "swarming in thousands." Yet with the exception of the hero's mother and a single family besides, it appears to contain no one adult person among all these thousands who is not actually or potentially either a thief, or a prostitute, or a "fence," or a professional mendicant, or the female decoy

of drunken libertines for the purpose of robbery with murderous violence. In the opening chapter of the book, the wife of Billy Leary brings in a victim to the "cosh"—an iron rod with a knob at the end which the craftsman carried in his coat-sleeve, "waiting about dark staircase corners, till his wife (married or not) brought in a well drunken stranger, when with a sudden blow behind the head the stranger was happily coshed, and whatever was found on him as he lay insensible was the profit of the transaction." And we are told that "there were legends of surprising ingatherings achieved by wives of especial diligence: one of a woman who had brought to the cosh some six-and-twenty on a night of public rejoicing." Mrs. Leary's stranger was "happily coshed," and afterwards thrown out into the street. As thus:—

In a little while something large and dark was pushed forth from the door opening near Jago Row, which Billy Leary's spouse had entered. The thing rolled over and lay tumbled on the pavement for a time unmoved. It might have been yet another would-be sleeper, but for its stillness. Just such a thing it seemed belike to two that lifted their heads and peered from a few yards off till they rose on hands and knees and crept to where it lay: Jago rats both. A man it was, with a thick smear across his face and about his head, the source of the dark trickle that sought the gutter dreamily over the broken flags. The drab stuff of his pockets peeped out here and there in a crumpled bunch, and his waistcoat gaped where the watch guard had been. Clearly here was an uncommonly remunerative cosh—a cosh so good that the boots had been neglected and remained on the man's feet. These the kneeling two unlaced deftly, and rising, prize in hand, vanished in the deeper shadow of Jago Row.

This, be it observed, is not a crime of rare occurrence, and the work of a limited class of criminals. You are invited to believe that it is a regular industry of the Jago practised *semper, ubique et ab omnibus*, throughout the whole district, at all times and by every one who has the means of practising it with success. Lack of such

means is the only limit to it. "S'elp-me!" says one of the characters, referring to Mrs. Leary, "I'd carry the cosh meself if I'd a woman like 'er."

After this one ought not, perhaps, to be surprised at the fight between the Ranns and the Learys, related with all the circumstantiality of the scrimmage between Molly Seagrim and her enemies in the churchyard, though in a grim, smileless fashion, contrasting comically enough with Fielding's most humorous burlesque of a Homeric battlepiece. But it lasts for twenty mortal pages, until indeed we get a little tired of the prowess of Sally Green in biting and tearing out the hair of her female adversaries, and are almost glad when Nora Walsh brings the fight to a close by breaking a bottle on the kerb and stabbing Sally about the face with the jagged points. The two clans subsequently fraternize, and at a later stage of this agreeable romance one portion invites the other to a "sing-song" at Mother Gapps, when the floor unfortunately falls in, and the guests suspecting a ploy, attack their hosts with exceeding savagery in the cellar. When the burglar-father of little Dicky Perrott, the hero of the book, is not "burgling," an occupation which by affording him facilities for the murder of a treacherous fence conducts him ultimately to the gallows, the reader is entertained principally with fights; but the story of Dicky himself is interesting, though with odd touches of old fashioned melodrama about it, and would be much more so if not buried as it is beneath the mass of squalid irrelevances which encumbers the book.

No wonder that those who know the East End of London have protested against this picture. The houses in that area of "two hundred and fifty yards square" have been cleared of its former occupants and their dens, and the original of the Jago has, it is admitted, ceased to exist. But I will make bold to say that as described by Mr. Morrison it never did exist. Mr. Morrison has simply taken all the types of London misery, foulness, and rascality, and "dumped them down" on the

area aforesaid. He has taken the brutal pugnacity of one of the courts of an Irish quarter, mixed it with the knavery of a thieves' kitchen in some other district, made "the gruel thick and slab" in his infernal cauldron with a highly concentrated dose of the foul scum which is to be found floating, though in a much diluted form, on the surface of the vast sea of poverty in all great cities; and, pouring the precious compost into a comparatively small vessel, he invites the world to inspect it as a sort of essence or extract of metropolitan degradation. If it is not what you would actually find in exploring the Jago, it is no doubt what you might find if all London had happened to pour its manifold streams of corruption into that particular *scatina*. I have nothing to say for the moment against art of this kind, except that it is certainly not realism. It is the idealizing method, and its result is as essentially ideal as the Venus of Milo. That it is the idealization of ugliness, instead of beauty, is a mere detail.

So much for the book as a whole. As an imaginative picture of life at the East End, that is to say as a picture formed out of a multitude of sordid and shocking actualities, many or most of them dissociated from each other in real life, but here imaginatively combined for the purposes of a work of fiction—it may pass; but unless words are to part with all their distinctions of meaning, it can no more be a realistic history of any community of human beings that ever existed on the earth, than is the "Voyage to the Hounyhms."

Nevertheless, though the total effect of the story is unreal and phantasmagoric, yet, considered as a series of distinct scenes, or as a gallery of repulsive portraits, may it not, it may be asked, be a triumph of accurate description and lifelike portraiture? Grant that the collocation of so many hideous figures and the concatenation of such an uninterrupted succession of revolting incidents, is misdescribed as "realism," yet the drawing of those figures and

the narrative of those incidents may be masterpieces of realistic art. Well, is that so? As for the incidents, no doubt you are made to "see them" plainly enough; but, speaking for myself personally, I see them not a whit more plainly for the crudities of the description. There is a fight, half prize-fight, in "A Child of the Jago," a sort of incident which interests if not delights all of us, and probably will continue to do so until the human race is ready for elevation to some loftier, but less lively, plane of being. It is most conscientiously described—with all the conscientiousness indeed of the gentleman mentioned by Sheridan, who described the Phoenix "like a poulterer," not "letting us off a single feather." Every punch with its effect on the punched part is faithfully delineated in black and blue, picked out with crimson; but the blood and bruises with which Mr. Morrison so lavishly adorns his pages do not make us realize the battle one whit more vividly than, for instance, we realize the prize fight in "Rodney Stone," an incident nevertheless in which Mr. Conan Doyle cannot be accused of shirking any necessary detail. And so with the faction fight, and the scrimmage after the sing-song, and the murder which bring the plot to its climax. They are vigorous pieces of description, but any intelligent reader who compares them with other examples, by writers of other schools, will find that their vigor is not really enhanced by the violences of coloring and that their reality does not in the least depend upon their so-called realism.

As to the character drawing I willingly admit its occasionally high merit. Josh Perrott, the burglar father of Dicky, is a convincing portrait, and strikes one as consistent and unexaggerated. The man has the virtues, or rather, the one virtue, which goes with the vices of the lowest type of Englishman—that dogged stoicism in the face of death, which is the nobler, as the brute ferocity is the baser, side of his bulldog nature. But what is one to say of Aaron Queech, of Father

Sturt—nay, of Dicky Perrott himself? Have the transactions of Queech with Dicky, and the relations of Dicky to Queech, been actually studied from East End criminal life, or are they not rather exercises in the more stagy and artificial manner of the despised sentimentalist Dickens? And, if so, what a falling off is here for the New Realism! To observe that Aaron Queech is simply a revival of our old friend Mr. Fagin, is a too obvious criticism, and is a not sufficiently serious objection—for “comic relief” is needed sorely enough in Mr. Morrison’s pages, Heaven knows, and to borrow it from Dickens is at least, in a phrase of that humorist’s own, to “go to the right shop” for it. But it is a little too much to make an amalgam of Artful Dodger and Oliver Twist, which really is what Mr. Morrison has done with Dicky Perrott. For what else can be said of a boy who is precocious enough to steal a nickel clock from a neighbor’s mantelpiece, yet green enough to allow a Jew fence to have it in liquidation of a debt of twopence. The child-thief is not quite so common, I hope, even in a thieves’ quarter, as we should gather from Mr. Morrison’s writings; but there can be very few East-End children, honest or dishonest, who don’t know more about the price of articles than that. They acquire that knowledge in only too hard a school and begin at only too tender an age. The theft, again, of the cheap toy musical-box by way of remorseful compensation of the robbed Ropers with “a thing worth any fifty clocks” in Dicky’s estimation—surely that is not realistically imagined. Surely that is not a natural touch of childish character in a child of the Jago. It is only the well-nurtured and well-cared-for child who sees no reason why “grown-ups” should not value toys, as he does himself, more highly than articles of domestic use. A child of the Jago would have known very well that if his mother were bound for the pawnbroker’s she would be more likely to take a flat iron with her than a tin soldier. But that Dicky’s character

should abound with these incongruous sentimental touches is not surprising; for sentimentalism is in truth the Nemesis that dogs the New Realism and its professors. In their pose of cynical self-expression, in their determination to make their realism “unflinching,” “relentless,” “terrible,” and all the rest of it, they so sternly shut their eyes to the real pathos of the scenes and lives which they describe, that at last they seem to lose the power of discriminating between the real article and its counterfeits, and when they need the pathetic for the purposes of a foil, they are compelled to fall back upon shams of their own invention.

Even when they quit the hideous and revolting for the merely dreary and depressing, the same note of exaggeration almost everywhere asserts itself. In “Tales of Mean Streets,” Mr. Morrison has strung together fifteen short stories, some of them repulsive, after the fashion of his long story above discussed, others simply gloomy and miserable. Dealing, as he does, only with two or three characters, in most of these stories his realism produces a less unreal impression—for, of course, the obvious reason that it is easier to believe in the existence of one or two brutes and savages than of a whole London district, peopled by such inhabitants “in swarming thousands,” and by no one else. I need not, however, discuss either the hideous or the merely dreary stories in this volume. Not the former, because it would be going over the ground already traversed; and not the latter, because Mr. Morrison has so admirably defined his own standpoint with regard to them in the Introduction, that it will simply suffice me to examine that.

In this Introduction Mr. Morrison describes, and powerfully describes, a mean East End street, and the lives of its inhabitants. It is not a thieves’ street like any of the courts and alleys of the Jago; it is the abode of fairly respectable working men, with habits of regular industry. Indeed, it is this regularity, with the deadly tedium

created by it, which Mr. Morrison mainly relies on for his effect. He tells us how the inhabitants of this street are knocked up every morning at half past five by the policeman or the night watchman, and rise and go to their day's labor at the docks, the gas works, and the ship yards; how a little later comes the "trotting of sorrow-laden little feet along the grim street to the grim Board School, three grim streets off;" then silence, save for a subdued sound of scrubbing here and there, and the puny squall of croupy infants;" then, still later on, "a new trotting of little feet to docks, gas works, and ship yards with father's dinner in a bason and a red handkerchief," and so to the Board School again; then "more muffled scrubbing and more squalling;" the return of the children from school, the return of sooty artisans from work; a "smell of bloater up and down;" nightfall; the fighting of boys in the street, perhaps of men at the corner near the beer-shop; sleep.

And this is the record of a day in this street; and every day is hopelessly the same except Sunday, when, however, "one monotony" is only "broken by another." And the day is only symbolical of the life, which has its dawn of birth, its school time, "its midday play hour, when love peeps even into this street;" then more trotting of little feet, this time new and strange little feet; the scrubbing and squalling, the end of the sooty day's work, the last home-coming, nightfall, sleep. Where in the East End, asks Mr. Morrison in conclusion, lies this street? And he answers, "Everywhere."

The hundred and fifty yards is only a link in a long and a mightily tangled chain—is only a turn in a tortuous maze. This street of the square holes is hundreds of miles long. That it is planned in short lengths is true, but there is no other way in the world that can more properly be called a single street because of its dismal lack of accent, its sordid uniformity, its utter remoteness from delight.

Yes, it is a picture of infinite melan-

choly, but whence does its melancholy arise? From the meanness of the mean street and the exceptionally dull and narrow lives of its inhabitants? That Mr. Morrison intends to convey that impression is obvious; but the impression is nine-tenths of it false. Why, if I had Mr. Morrison's fine descriptive gift, I would select a street quite other than mean, a street consisting, not of poverty-stricken little houses, but of "eligible" suburban villas, a street inhabited not by hard-pressed artisans, but by comfortable, even by "warm" City men; and I would undertake to describe it and the daily lives of its inhabitants—the daily journey of the men to their business; the daily resumption by the women of their burden of household duties and household worries; their Sundays; the growth and departure of their children; their old age; their death—I say that had I the pen of Mr. Morrison I would undertake so to describe these things, that the heart of the reader should sink and shrink within him at the thought of man's lot upon earth, and, perhaps, burn with anger at the spiritless patience in which man endures it, with the "quietus" of the "bare bodkin" always within his reach. The power of suggesting these emotions is not a property of mean streets; it is a property of all streets, a property of life itself, with its unresting but aimless flow. If Mr. Morrison has not yet felt that himself, he will feel it before he passes middle age, and he will know then, if he does not already know, the true composition of the bitter draught that he has here brewed and presented to us. He will admit that he has been trying to pass off upon us a mixture of *Weltschmerz* and *tedium vite* as genuine "Essence of Mean Street."

Measured out in minim glasses and copiously diluted, it is not an unpleasant potion, though it is enervating if too often indulged in and positively deadly in large doses; but always, and in any case, it is a subjective product, a way of looking at things, not a quality of the things seen. The people

who thus depress you with the intense monotony of their lives, do not, except by moments, feel it themselves any more than, except by moments, you feel the monotony of your own. Writers who bear this in mind are safeguarded from exaggeration; but Mr. Morrison is not of them. For see how he proceeds with the account of the mean street. "Nobody laughs here," says he, "life is too serious a thing! Nobody sings." Is that true of any street in London or elsewhere? nay, is it true of any assemblage of human beings, numbering children among them? Again, "Nobody from this street goes to the theatre. That would mean too long a journey, and would cost money, which might buy bread and cheese and boots." Indeed? It is from the daughters of these families that domestic service (when they will condescend to it) is largely recruited further west. If Mr. Morrison will ask the next housemaid he meets if she ever went to the theatre, I can promise him that *elle lui dira des nouvelles*. True, they ought not to be *nouvelles* to one who professes to have made a special study of the working class; though when he adds that for those workmen "who wear black Sunday suits" theatre going "would be sinful," it is difficult not to suspect him of a confusion between this class and the *petite bourgeoisie*. And what in the name of all the maidservants in London are we to make of this? "Now and again a penny novel has been found among the private treasures of a growing daughter, and been wrathfully confiscated." Do they then only begin to acquire their taste for this class of literature, and to collect their ample libraries of it *after* accepting their situations? If so, the growth, both of the taste and the library, is astonishingly rapid.

But if this is how the New Realism deals with the merely pathetic side of humble life; if these are its caricatures of the truth, where the truth is matter of pretty general knowledge, how are we to trust its dealings with those hideous and revolting aspects of

the truth, which are matters of special inquiry and expert information? We hardly need the counter testimony of experts to feel assured that, in the latter case also, the picture, as a whole, is overdrawn. It is not only that the note of exaggeration runs through its details, but that when they are substantially true, they have been so selected as to render the total impression false. For the impulse to that selection has not been artistically sincere. A public avid of sensation and critics wanting in the sense of measure have corrupted it, until the desire of each writer to strike and shock more violently than his competitors, to be more "relentless" and "unflinching," to write a "stronger," even if only in the sense of a more pungently malodorous, book than they, has first driven them to load their literary palettes with only "lurid" colors, and is now rapidly demoralizing if it, with some of them, has not already demoralized their artistic sense to the extent of blinding it to all other hues. That this fate should befall some of them is not, perhaps, a matter worth any sensible man's regret; but Mr. Arthur Morrison not only shows the promise but has given proof of the power of better things.

H. D. TRAILL.

From Temple Bar.

THE PLACE OF YELLOW BRICK.

"I am aware that the truth of midnight does not exclude the truth of noonday, though one's nature may lead him to dwell in the former rather than the latter."

The wall surrounding the Place of Yellow Brick is built of the same material, and partly in steps, because the ground runs down hill. Outside its northern face a broken road, dishevelled palings, a clump of stunted fir-trees and greeny-brown downland stretching into the mist of distance; inside it pigstyes, gas-works, and vegetable plots. All this part of the scenery is fixed. Nobody

but the County Council can alter it, and they like it as it is.

Four o'clock on a November afternoon. A man hoeing one of the vegetable plots, and the sun looking at the whole map of them slantwise with a watery smile. A thrush in the fir-clump mingling his song with the click of the hoe against the flints. That particular scene never can be reproduced not even by the County Council.

At the end of the last row but three of his plot the man stopped and looked back at his work.

"Only three more," he said, "and then—" He checked himself, and, with an uneasy, haggard glance at the wall, bent to his task again.

Another row done, another halt. Then an uncontrollable impulse seized him, and he knelt down, covering his eyes with his hand.

"Lead us not into temptation," he said. "Why do they give me a plot so near the wall? It comes over me worse to-day." He continued hoeing, with an effort. It was a cold day, but the perspiration stood thick on his forehead, because there was something in his head working too, harder than the hoe. It was, perhaps, only a coincidence, but the last row was finished just as the head-work became too swift and pressing to permit of it. He did not raise his eyes, but looked hard at the ground at his feet. The cloud lifting from his brain created a strange series of pangs, which made him afraid to move.

"It's almost past bearing," he said gently.

The thrush was singing louder in the fir-clump, and the sun cast one final gleam before disappearing behind the bank of black cloud in the west.

"It is my last chance," said the man louder. And the yellow wall cast it back in his teeth—"last chance."

That decided for him. He shouldered his hoe and shuffled down between the rows to the wall, stopping opposite a buttress. Without further thought of how or why, he planted the hoe against the wall, crooked his fingers round the

further side of the buttress, and placed a heel on a projecting brick. In a moment his other foot was on the top of the hoe, and his hand touched the coping. The drop on the outer side was a yard more than he had to climb; and the shock sent him staggering into the muddy road with a sensation of jarred heels and knees unstrung. A strange dead pain shot through him as he straightened himself, and looked round. The feeling of guiltiness had disappeared. He left it with his hoe on the other side of the wall. He had no fears now; no, nor doubts. His path was clear, across the stretch of down into the mist. With a quick step he set out, stumbling over the flints and little stubborn bushes; now picking his way, now pushing doggedly ahead, regardless of obstacles. In spite of the roughness of the ground, in spite of growing breathlessness, there came to him a comforting sense of triumph and progress. Further and further; the mist, it seemed to him, must be getting much nearer now, though it looked as far off as ever. Suddenly the well-known tones of a bell made him start, and wheel round. There was the wall, a few hundred yards away, and the chimneys of the dreadful place he had left standing out sharply against the sky. He stood for a moment irresolute. The dusk was sweeping up in waves now, as the jagged ropes of black cloud filed one by one into the waning light. He welcomed it—the coming darkness. It would be a time for peaceful reflection, after the turmoil of the last few hours. Only he must find a hiding-place first. Anywhither then, as his feet might lead him. It would not take very long, and he was not quite tired out. On he went, in a zigzag course athwart the slope, in his own imagination striding along, without looking right or left, and compelling his growing thoughts within their lair, till he should have leisure to draw them forth. The decrepit figure, with its wildly waving hands, made a strange appearance as it ambled across the rutty road at the foot of the slope and dived helplessly into the scrub and thorn bushes beyond. His hoarse pant-

ing sounded strangely through the still air, and he was muttering between his sobs. You might have heard him, had you been there, for some seven minutes more; then would have fallen on your ears a sound of crackling twigs. Then silence. Sinking down where the straight stems of hazel grew thin in the middle of the shaw, a delicious sense of wrapt-up solitude stole over him, shutting out everything but self, and wafting him imperceptibly into a strange land of half-awakened memories and half-unrealized dreams. The damp moss on which he rested became to him as light as cloud; and he floated on it, to and fro, in a gradually brightening paradise, which was his own. There was no impatience in his soul for the full glory of the vision; he would wait gladly for its appointed time. To look from side to side and see softly illumined faces in constant gaze on his was enough, almost more than enough. And now he sank a little further back, and raised one arm above his head. The light was brighter; and an indistinct outline of houses rose out of the cloud. The faint "wop-wop" of a blackbird, who had been disturbed by this intrusion into his native shaw, and who was now returning by stages from a far corner, awoke him. The bird, as is its wont, flew past, uttering a shriek opposite to his hiding-place. He did not quite realize where he was. Darkness had settled down black and impenetrable; and the chill of night was beginning to numb his hands and feet. But he woke enough to know that he had been dreaming, and that the growing brightness of the vision was really the gradual clearing of his brain. The reason of his life within the yellow wall came to him dimly; but as he tried to reckon up the years, he became tired and returned to the vision. The faces were clearer, and the land brighter. It was crowded with things more or less distinct; a bridge and a roadway thereby were the clearest; he dared not stare too hard because of the strain on his eyes. *Eyes!* the word brought something more to him. He had been warned not to strain his eyes, and by a

doctor too, who lived in a street near the bridge.

The blackbird lit on a hazel twig close to him, and shrieked again. The sound awoke him a second time; and he listened dreamily, as his disturber uttered a final cry and retreated across the open space to a clump of junipers.

He winked his eyes against the velvety darkness, and gathered up the skein of the vision again. The sense of security, which he associated with being in the dark, now explained itself. He had been warned not to use his eyes much; but he did it—did it, always was doing it—against orders. What said the vision? It was brighter still, and showed him something more. The little views of the street and the canal, and the smiling faces, were ranged together evenly, each in its little frame of cloud. The fineness of their lines was exquisite; he crawled forward for a moment to examine them, and saw that they were almost too fine. Then he withdrew his gaze with a guilty start.

A cart came into hearing, and rattled over the flints in a newly mended bit of road, tumbling the vision out of sight, and bringing him back to a rude realization of the shaw, and the damp moss, and the darkness. Then the concrete meaning occurred to him—he had been a steel engraver once. How long ago he could not tell. It was a battle between his eyes and the lines in the steel. And the lines had won, pushed his brains sideways, as it seemed to him, so that one day he dropped his tools on the floor and cried for help, and vowed not to ill-use his eyes again—too late.

The vision came to his help once more. It was more radiant and wonderful. The faces were known to him now; they were portraits of his wife and three children, and the peculiar design of the vision followed closely in style a frontispiece for a book of Christmas stories, by Charles Dickens. It was the most perfect portrayal of life, in the world or out of it, and all his own. The faces could speak; he could hear the echo of steps on the path under the bridge; even the peculiar smell of the place came

back to him. The hum of voices was pleasant music; and the smile was a smile of universal recognition. Life, health, and happiness were concentrated in the moving scene. It occurred to him further that the street was Shepherdess Walk, and the bridge spanned the Regent's Canal.

There remained one final transfiguration before the whole vanished. He could never describe it properly, because the unearthly beauty of the scene declined to be committed to words. But he said that he saw over all the face of the Great Snowman who orders and governs all visions and dreams. And he added that the meaning of everything he had seen was made manifest to him, including the meaning of his life within the Place of Yellow Brick. His mind was raised out of the darkness, and he looked just for the moment on the brilliant landscape, Shepherdess Walk, the Regent's Canal, the people in the carts and on the pavements, all lit up with one dazzling iridescence, reflected from the face of God.

Whether by design or coincidence it may not be known, but at this second the moon leapt suddenly from behind a ridge of clouds and shed a sheaf of her rays on his closed eyes. He stretched out his hands and awoke, slowly and painfully. There seemed to be a harsh voice telling him that it was time to forsake visions and grasp the real world. It must have seemed a very harsh voice indeed to a man, newly awakened in body and soul alike, whose clothes were wet, whose limbs were chilled and stiff, and whose chief sensations were those of acute hunger. But he obeyed it. With his hands to his forehead he staggered forth from the shaw, across the scrub into the road, a trembling but sane man.

They found him—the two keepers who had been sent to search—walking steadily towards London. He turned back with them without comment or demur; only when they arrived within sight of the Place of Yellow Brick he asked to be blindfolded; for the sake of his eyes, he said. Later he was con-

fronted with the head doctor, as are all truants from the Place of Yellow Brick.

"This is a bad case," said the head doctor.

There was no reply.

"A disappointment too to me," he went on; "I thought you were much better. Take your hand away from your eyes."

The truant dropped his hand to his side, and murmured, "I *was* much better, sir."

He spoke very softly, for fear the dreadful old self should hear and awake. Consequently the other did not hear him, but merely leaned back, and looked warily into his eyes. After half a minute, during which they remained in mutual gaze, the head doctor sighed and reached forward to an electric bell on the table. Then he wrote on a half sheet of paper, "No. 471. Watch carefully, and report." As the pen moved over the paper, No. 471 knew that the old terror had begun again, and as the knowledge came home to him, he felt the cloud settling on his brain.

But as they led him from the room, he managed to say, "It was true, sir, while it lasted—worth anything to me!"

"Hopeless," said the head doctor, as the door closed.

STEPHEN HARDCASTLE CLARKE.

From The St. James Gazette.
WEATHER SIGNS A DELUSION.

Those who believe in weather-lore have been busy with predictions of a coming severe winter. The hawthorn-berries and the hips of the wild rose have been unusually plentiful. They point with triumph to the fact that last winter the supply was extremely short and the winter was mild and muggy. Then the swallows departed unusually early, and the snow-buntings have come in unusual numbers. The snow-bunting, which is one of the great finch family, is common in the arctic regions in the summer, and, migrating South in the winter, has always been found in more or less large flocks in the British

Isles, especially in Scotland and the North of England, where it is regarded as the herald of snow and frost. Here again it is remarked that last winter, which passed with scarce any frost or snow, brought us comparatively few of these feathered visitors. The winter before that, with its great frost, brought them in large numbers. This year they are arriving in greater numbers than ever, the marsh-lands of the Eastern and Fen Counties being full of their twittering. What can this forecast but a severe winter?

To the believer in weather-lore there is no answer but one. But to the scientific observer these are but popular fallacies. It may not be generally known that there is in connection with the Royal Meteorological Society a department of phenological observation. Some hundred and twenty observers are continually engaged in noting down facts connected with the fauna and flora of the country as regards the seasons and the weather. In this way a complete record is being formed of the weather, its effects on vegetation, on flowers, crops, and trees, the arrival and departure of birds, the prevalence or absence of insects, and so on, throughout every department of nature. A copious report is published every year. At first sight the last issue of this report would seem to lend some corroboration to the claims of the weather-lore. Granted that hips and haws were plentiful at the beginning of the 1894-95 winter. The succeeding winter was particularly severe. Large numbers of our native birds perished of starvation through their usual supplies having been cut off for weeks together. Those most frequently mentioned as found among the victims of the frost are starlings, thrushes, blackbirds, rooks, and larks. During January and February gulls and sea-birds flocked inland, and became so tame that they went boldly to houses in towns to be fed. Rabbits

and hares suffered severely; and the deer in the Highlands were driven from their usual haunts. Birds seldom to be seen at other times visited our shores—among them the little auk, thousands of which arrived on the north-east coast. Then, as though lending still more confirmation, it is recorded that at the beginning of the mild winter of 1895-96 the hips on the wild roses were abundant, but there were scarcely any berries at all on the hawthorn or holly.

The scientific observer admits the facts, but declares the popular deduction erroneous. At the head of the phenological department is Mr. Edward Mawley, F.R.H.S., who has made a life study of these matters, and who is responsible for the annual report from which we have quoted. He has favored us with the views he has formed and he declares the idea of winter birds and hawthorn berries being indications of severe winter to be "popular fallacies." First, with regard to the birds, he says that they come to our shores from the north during the winter months in unusual numbers only when their supply of food is cut off by heavy snow or intense cold. So that their arrival here is simply an indication of severe weather in those regions from which they have been driven, and by no means a certain sign that similar severe weather will extend to the British Isles. Secondly, with regard to the hawthorn berries he points out that berries are numerous one year and not another for the same reason that the crop of apples, or any other tree or bush fruit, is abundant or scanty. Given a favorable autumn for maturing the shoots of a hawthorn bush, followed by any but an exceptionally sharp winter, and a genial flowering period in the spring, hawthorn berries are certain to be singularly plentiful later in the year. It has been, he says, these conditions which have produced the remarkable crop of haws this year.

